

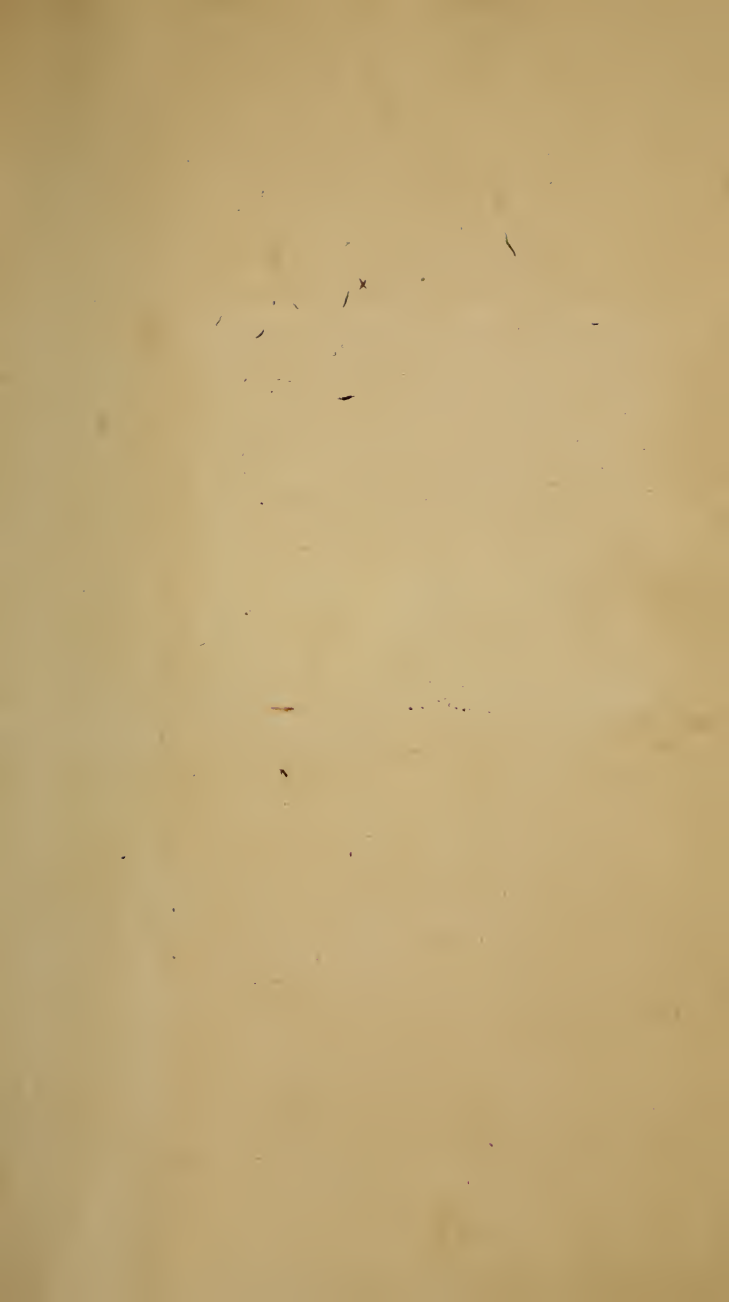
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RESEARCHES

OF THE

REV. E. SMITH AND REV. H. G. O. DWIGHT

IN

A R M E N I A :

INCLUDING A JOURNEY

THROUGH ASIA MINOR, AND INTO GEORGIA AND PERSIA.

WITH A VISIT TO THE

NESTORIAN AND CHALDEAN CHRISTIANS

OF OORMIAH AND SALMAS.

IN TWO VOLUMES — VOL. II.

BY ELI SMITH,

Missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for
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LETTER XII.

FROM SHOOSHA TO DATEV.

Dishonesty and falsehood of the Armenians and moslems—Route proposed—Leave Shoosha—Kúlaah-kishlák—Impressions respecting a republican government—Doctrines respecting the Virgin—Degh—Armenian nobility—Character of the Armenians for industry—Karahoonch—Passage of the river of Datev—Arrival at the convent of Datev—Diocese of Sūnik—Family devotions of the Armenians—Orders of the Armenian clergy—Moral character and influence of convents—Their influence upon education—Diocesan bishops—Their income—Their influence—Decline of monasticism.

DEAR SIR,

WERE we to record all the vexations and disappointments to which we are subjected in our journey, by the total want of truth that universally prevailed, almost every page of our journals would be disfigured by some complaint. As faithful describers of the character of the people, however, we are bound to report enough to show you, that lying is so common as almost to form a part of their nature. So blinded even is their conscience, as not to be easily persuaded to regard it as a sin, especially when no evil to others is the designed object of it. Mutual confidence, of course, hardly exists; and only by being experi-

mentally acquainted with all the varied modes of deceiving, are they able to regulate their dealings with each other. This total disregard of truth threw indescribable obstacles in the way of our obtaining correct information; and the difficulty evidently increased as we advanced eastward. In answer to the most common questions, we were many and many a time told what was palpably false, for no other imaginable reason, than either the depraved taste of our informants for falsehood, or a dislike to trouble themselves with the accuracy of truth. And never could we confide in what was said to us, without confirming it by cross-questioning, or by otherwise finding a balance of probabilities in its favor.

The difficulty was not less in our dealings with the people than in our inquiries of them. Deeming it imprudent on account of my feeble health, to leave Shoosha with no other attendant than Antonio, whom we had taken to help us in the languages of the country, rather than to serve us, we endeavored to procure another for a travelling servant and cook. Four were engaged successively by solemn contract, all of whom disappointed us; some never making their appearance at all after the bargain was completed, and others deserting us after two or three days' service. Our difficulty with muleteers was scarcely less; we continued to hire different sets of them in vain, until the pledge of contract was finally given, and insured our departure. The custom of the pledge is universal wherever I have travelled in Syria, Greece and Armenia. No matter how small it be, nor which of the contracting parties gives it, it binds the bargain, which otherwise, though made with the most solemn promises, might be broken for the merest trifle. I have known its validity fail but once, and then the poor muleteer's horses were siezed by government, and he restored our pledge. Both moslems and Armenians are sufficiently given to falsehood, but the latter more so than

the former. I must add, too, that the kindred vice of profaneness, in all its varieties, is équally common to both sects. It is heard from every mouth, and so lightly is it regarded, as not to be esteemed sinful.

It was on the 1st of November that we found ourselves in readiness to bid farewell to our hospitable and beloved brethren at Shoosha. The cholera had ceased in the valley of the Aras; and though the plague still continued at Tebriz, where it had broken out to finish the desolation commenced by the cholera, we determined to move in that direction. My own health, too, was not restored beyond a liability to constant relapses, but we hoped that travelling would confirm it. The usual caravan route to Tebriz passes a little to the east of Shoosha, and takes nearly a straight course. But our intention being to visit Echmiádzin on our way, we took a more untravelled road, directly over the mountains of Kara-bagh to Nakhcheván; anticipating that the difficulties of the way would be more than compensated, by the opportunity it would present of seeing the Armenians in a more primitive and simple state, than they are perhaps elsewhere to be found. In order to facilitate our progress, our former friend the commandant of Kars, who had now succeeded to the command of Shoosha, repeated his civilities, by offering us an order for the villages on the road to furnish us with lodgings and guides.

With an awkward hostler, whom we had taken as a final resort, for a servant and cook, and mounted on five horses owned by two Persian muleteers, we started at 10 A. M. Our course lay directly over the mountains, which rose behind and towered far above our mountain citadel, and had for several weeks been the resting place of dark clouds, that to our impatient eye threatened daily to cover them with impassable snow-drifts. We issued from the Eriván gate, and descending awhile, came upon the top of the ridge, which connects in this direction the base of the rock of Shoo-

sha with the mountain. We were still so elevated that the objects at the bottom of the ravines on either side could be but indistinctly seen, and the steepness of the declivity along which we descended into that on the left, put the carefulness of our horses to a severe test. We finished the descent without accident, and then, following a path little better than a goat's track, over sloping rocks and along the edge of chasms, we traced the torrent that washes the bed of the ravine, to the very top of the mountain.

Though we had yet found no road more difficult, we enjoyed it much. Our spirits, cheered by feelings of returning health and freedom to move again after so long a confinement, and by the providential deliverance we had experienced from the pestilence by which a thousand had fallen at our side and ten thousand at our right hand, were additionally exhilarated by a smiling November's sun, which, shining through a cloudless sky, warmed without oppressing us. How charming, too, was the chrystal stream that murmured by us, after the briny wells of Shoosha! We felt as if we could swallow enough to quench an elephant's thirst, merely for the pleasure of drinking. The party-colored leaves, too, silently dropping from the oak, maple, beech, hawthorn and other trees, which covered the sides of the mountain and partly shaded our path, threw over our feelings a tinge of pleasing melancholy. And nothing interrupted the general stillness, but the sudden start of a lizard among the leaves, or the bark of a dog of some straggling nomad, who with tardy steps was edging his way to join his companions already in their winter-quarters on the banks of the Koor. The height of the mountain may be estimated from the fact, that it divides the waters of the Koor from those of the Aras. We found the topmost ridge entirely destitute of trees, as if even they had retired before the winds and snows that in winter make it their sporting place; and the green sward that cover-

ed it, seemed only to add to its bleakness. We descended immediately, on the farther side, into a ravine as steep and profound as the one we had ascended, but destitute of rocks and precipices. Crossing a torrent at its bottom, and ascending a fatiguing distance the steep declivity of a mountain on its left side, we stopped at Kúlaah-kishlák, (called also Kúlaah-déresy,) the first village on the road. Its estimated distance from Shoosha is only 4 *fúrsakhs* ;* but we were at least seven hours on the road.

Without a sight of the commandant's order, the kakhia readily received us as his guests. A kind of public room was opened, and after it was cleared of some dishes used for the entertainment of poultry in the absence of travellers, and spread with carpets, we found in it comfortable accommodations. A supper of rice revived me, and I was encouraged at finding myself not too fatigued by my first day's ride for a little conversation with our host. The village contained about 50 under-ground houses, all inhabited by Armenians, who had one church and two priests. It was the limit of the extent, in this direction, of the diocese of Kántasar. The kakhia affirmed that no schools existed either here or in any of the surrounding villages; and declared, as a reason, that no one was qualified to teach, and probably none wished to learn. His own manifest indifference to the subject tended to confirm the latter assertion. He estimated the number in this village who could read at only six.

Our inquisitiveness respecting his village and nation, led him to take a similar liberty to question us respecting our

* Though not yet in Persia, we must now adopt the Persian measure of distance, it being here the prevalent one. It is the ancient *parasang*, still called in Persian *fúrsakh*, but in Turkish *agháj*, or tree. The latter name is most known where we travelled, but I prefer the former for its classical associations. It is not a measured distance, but varies little from 4 miles.

country. A conversation ensued resembling many that occurred during our journey, and will afford you a fair specimen of the ideas suggested to the more sensible of the common people in this part of the world, on first hearing of a republican government. Learning that we were from the *Yengy Dünja* (new world), and acknowledged subjection to no European government, he inquired if we had a king of our own. Our reply led him to ask us, with the evident impression that it would be a great privilege and give us respectability, if we *could* not have one. We assured him that we could, but that not one among us wished it, and were a man to declare himself king, he would inevitably be killed. He demanded, with astonishment the reason. Because, said we, we prefer the liberty and privilege of governing ourselves, to the splendor, expense and tyranny of kings; for now, according to the fundamental principle of our government, every citizen has a voice in the choice of officers, the laying of taxes, and the enacting of laws. After reflecting a moment, he concluded that there could be no *barakét* (prosperity) under such a government; and upon our declaring that our experience contradicted his opinion and asking his reasons, he added that there could be no public security, people must fall to robbing and killing each other. Noway desirous to diminish his happiness by persuading him that our government was better than his own, and in compliance with our unvarying principle to say nothing against the powers that be, we conceded that from what he knew of mankind his conclusion was natural and just. For such would inevitably be the result, were the people around him to have a government like ours. He must remember, however, we suggested, that we are a different people; that instead of being ignorant and demoralized, a large proportion of our countrymen are educated, under the influence of moral principle, and possessed of integrity.

Observing an Armenian Testament among our baggage, he began to read it, and found some difficulty in ascertaining what it was. It was evidently new to him, he had never read it, and no one in the village, he assured us, except the priests, owned a copy. He seemed to care little about it, however, and it only gave him occasion to ask if our church was nearly related to his in doctrine. We chose to answer in detail; that both believe in the Trinity, and in the incarnation and death of Christ to save the world; in a word, that both are founded upon the New Testament, and 'can they fail of being nearly related?' He replied that lately some Germans had come among them professing to have the same religion, but they denied the perpetual virginity of the mother of God, the mediation of the saints &c. and thus proved that their faith was essentially different. We would gladly have seized the occasion to remove his prejudices, which were evidently strong against our missionary brethren, but the fatigue of the day, and the previous conversation had left us too little nerve for argument. Antonio, however, whose eyes had been opened at Shoosha to many of the errors of his church, continued the conversation respecting the mediation of the virgin; and finally concluded by pledging himself to believe in it, if proof could be adduced that her body as well as her soul ascended to heaven.

The veneration of the Armenians for the virgin is not less than that of the Greeks; and being of necessity frequently alluded to in our journals, as one of their most prominent superstitions, it demands a moment's attention. The extent to which she is regarded as an *object of worship* and an *intercessor with God*, is sufficiently plain from the extracts already made from the Jamakirk in speaking of the nature of the Armenian church services. Her *perpetual virginity* is held to with an almost inconceivable strictness as an essential article of belief, and is dwelt

upon with indecent minuteness. Expressions occur in the creed already quoted from the prayer-book, which a sense of decency would not allow to be published. Others still worse are found in the daily prayers of the church, to which no delicate ear would allow itself to listen. The title, *Mother of God*, (in Armenian *Asdvadzadzin*, literally parent of God,) as applied to her, has been already frequently repeated. *Her freedom from original sin*, which is believed by both the Greeks and the papists, is not, we were assured by the vartabéds at Echmiádzin, an article of the Armenian faith; and I find it asserted by Nerses Shnorháli, ‘that the virgin Mary from whom Christ took his body was of the sinful nature of Adam.’* Very inconsistently, however, the Armenians celebrate the festival of her conception, which originated in the idea of the native purity of her nature. That a sufficiently high opinion is entertained of her holiness after her conception of our Lord, will appear from the same author. “It would be agreeable,” he says, “to my ideas, if I might venture to say, that these passions, as well as all diseased operations of mind and body were foreign, not only from that body which was united to the Word, but also from that of the holy virgin after the indescribable conception. For the place where God literally takes up his residence, obeys not the laws of nature, any more than did the burning bush, or the fiery furnace. We who are in the truth must believe, that after the virgin became the residence of the Spirit and the Word, human passions were entirely removed from her.”† Blasphemous as was the assertion of the vartabéd at Shoo-sha respecting her equality with the persons of the Trinity, he was almost borne out in it by the ideas of his countrymen. Even the Jamakírk calls her “the mediator of the world, seraph of dust, more famous than the cherubim.” And it is common to eulogize her by referring to the almighty word that called the light into existence, and saying;

* Unthanragán, p. 84, 204. † Ibid. p. 212, 213.

As God said "let there be light, and there was light," so she said to Gabriel, be it unto me according to thy word, and his words came to pass. The assumption of her body to heaven is firmly believed, and the event, as in the papal church, is celebrated by a festival.

Nov. 2. Refreshed by sleep and a light breakfast, we started at 7 and a quarter A. M. Cultivation, principally of grain, of which we saw none yesterday till we approached the village, was limited also on this side to its vicinity. For a great rarity in this part of the world, where houses for the sake of mutual protection are universally clustered closely together in villages, every farm had its farm-house, as if each proprietor could live quietly under his own vine and fig-tree. Barns, however, were wanting, and the haystacks which supplied their place were raised, either on scaffolds or on the limbs of trees, some six or eight feet from the ground, probably to be above the reach both of cattle and the snow. As we advanced, the ravine below us became a chasm of frightful depth, confined between perpendicular precipices. Our road led us up and down long declivities fearfully steep, and passed alternately through groves and pasturage grounds, till we came at length to an open prospect in front, of the heart of the mountainous part of Kara-bagh. It is an extensive table-land, separated from the valley of the Koor by the mountains we had crossed, and from the valley of the Aras by another range, now in sight and white with snow. Unlike both these mountains, it is entirely destitute of trees. In the bottom of a deep valley that separated us from it, we reached, at 11 and a half A. M. a beautifully transparent river running to the left toward the Aras. Its size induced us to avail ourselves of a log bridge at hand, but finding it impossible to pass a large rock on the farther side, we returned and forded it without difficulty. On the sunny sides of this warm valley were a few vineyards, the only ones

that met our eye between Shoosha and Nakhcheván. Ascending by the bed of one of the ravines that intersected the table-land before us, we reached at 2 and a quarter P. M. the Armenian village of Degh, 4 fúrsakhs from Kúlaah-kishlák.

Inquiring as usual for the kakhia to furnish us with lodgings, we were conducted to the house of a melik. By the side of the others, which were all under-ground cabins, it seemed a large and venerable building. The upper story, built of wood with a shingled roof, was indeed in ruins, but the lower part was solidly constructed of stone. Besides an arched portico in front, it consisted of two large apartments, each of which was covered with a lofty dome, and had no window to admit the light, nor chimney to let out the smoke, except a round aperture at the top. Directly beneath it in the centre of the room, the place for a fire was indicated only by a circle of hewn stone on a level with the rest of the floor, which was likewise of stone.

The only furniture of these prison-like apartments was a few piles of carpets, mattresses, coverlets and cushions. Carpets were immediately spread around the hearth, and a fire, which the coldness of the weather rendered necessary, was built for our accommodation. Unfortunately a clownish Russian soldier, by obstinately appropriating to himself a large share of the circle around it, and the smoke which would not find its way to the outlet above till the air was sufficiently heated to force it upward, combined to ruffle Antonio's temper so much, that, not content with falling out with the soldier, he undertook, also, to let loose his tongue upon ourselves. A warm fire and clear air soon set matters right, however, and the melik in the mean time, who was absent on our arrival, returned to welcome his guests. The parade made to receive him, and the feudal homage paid him by the villagers, reminded me of the state affected by the Emeers of Mount Lebanon. But his equi-

page was a caricature of all hereditary nobility. He had but one or two attendants, and rode upon an ass. We had already ordered a supper of piláv from our own rice, which was now brought in with the addition of a boiled fowl or two from his stock; and he sat down to help himself with all his guests including the soldier, leaving us in the awkward predicament of not knowing whether he was entertaining us, or we them. Neither spoon, nor knife, nor fork appeared; and each tore his fowl in pieces with his fingers, and laded up his piláv with his hands. Our host manifested little inclination to converse with us, and when we thought to lead him to it by telling him from whence we came, a question which he had neglected to ask, a few answers satisfied all the curiosity that was excited.

Melik is a word borrowed from the Arabic, in which language it means a king, but in Armenian it is only equivalent to noble. The ancient Armenian nobility, which was once so proud and powerful, is now almost extinct. With the exception of a family pretending to be descended from the Ardzroonies, and another from the Mamigonians but bearing another name, at Tiffís, we heard of no nobility claiming to belong to the ancient stock, out of the mountains of Kara-bagh. These mountains were formerly embraced in the province of Süník, which was inhabited by one of the most ancient, proudest and most powerful of the Armenian clans, called Süník, and also Sisagán. Its princes enjoyed for many centuries little less than independence; till finally one of them helped to destroy the dynasty of the Pakradians, by aspiring himself to the throne.* Even so late as the early part of the eighteenth century, during the Afghan invasion of Persia, a prince pretending to descent from the ancient Süník blood, succeeded in these mountains in throwing off the Persian yoke, and contending successfully for several years with

* St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 207.

his enemies.* The Armenians here have now, with less of civilization, more independence of character, than in any other part of their country; and their nobles, though poor, are considerably numerous. The title seems to descend to all the male children.

Nov. 3. Taking a guide from the melik for the convent of Datev, which though not on the direct road we determined to visit, we started at 7 and a quarter A. M. Our route lay across the table-land upon which we entered yesterday. Its waving surface was arable, and cultivated with grain throughout, in long narrow fields, without a fence to separate them. And, some being green with the crop already above the ground, others sowed and dry, and others still newly ploughed or now undergoing that operation, they presented a landscape of a singular aspect. The apparent fertility of the soil led us to doubt the statements of our host at Degh respecting its productiveness; but they were confirmed by our guide. A view of the many circular threshing floors for treading out grain, which crowned every little eminence around and were almost as numerous as the houses, had induced us in the evening to express to the melik our surprise at the quantity of grain that seemed to be cultivated by his village. His reply is a specimen of the unmeaning language of piety, which in this part of the world is in the mouth of every body, and seems a genuine characteristic of orientalism. 'We sow,' said he, 'a considerable quantity, but reap only what God gives us. In other parts, the farmers by irrigating their lands increase the natural productiveness of the soil; but the location of ours not admitting of this, we depend only upon the rain of heaven, and what they produce, therefore, is entirely the gift of God.' To more minute inquiries he replied, that their crops varied from one to five fold; four fold being the average of a good crop.

* Chamcheán, P. 7: c. 25.

The ploughmen whom we passed were cheering their labors with songs, as they drove their ploughs after teams of four pair of oxen, with a boy riding upon one of the leaders to direct their course. In the winter ten and in the summer eight pair of oxen are usually attached to each plough. Respecting the industry of the Armenians generally, I may take this opportunity to say, that if they cannot be called an indolent people, Asiatic want of energy prevails in all. The merchants are business men, and in some degree enterprising, but still find much time to indulge their ease. Mechanics and peasants do the work that devolves upon them, but with hardly force enough to clear them from the charge of laziness, and with none of the activity of mind that leads to improvements and inventions. With them it is most true, that there is no new thing under the sun; the way their fathers have trod, is that only which they deem it possible for them to pursue.

The numerous ravines that intersect the table-land over which we were passing, were of great depth, and though their precipitous stratified banks were of a consistency and appearance that left the distant observer doubtful whether they were clay or rock, they seemed to be gullies worn away by violent rains. Their sides and beds bristled with numerous slender cones some twenty feet high or more, each capped with a rock occasionally several tons in weight. The rocks had probably caused the curious formation, by defending the soil directly beneath them from the rains which had washed away the earth around. We at length descended, or almost slid so steep was the declivity, to the bottom of one of them, and there found a beautiful swollen river of the purest water. Then turning an angle, we suddenly came upon the village of Karahoonch. It was a small cluster of Armenian houses in a little nook, encircled high above on the north by an impending precipice. From the farther angle a cascade poured down its silvery riband of

water for the accommodation of the inhabitants; while enormous masses of rock, detached in former times, threatened in no unintelligible terms their very existence. Here our road seemed to end, and for awhile we knew not but it would end for the day. For it appeared that our guide had received orders to conduct us by this route, instead of the direct one of Kūrós, on account of the cholera which was said still to exist there, and he knew the way no farther. Another was soon procured; but how were we to find an egress in the direction of Datev? The villagers pointed us to the top of the precipice. We told them it was impossible. They laughed at us, and our guide, tucking the border of his gown in his girdle, led the way with the agility of a mountain goat. A serpentine path conducted us directly to the top, where a break in the ledge unseen from below opened again upon the elevated plain.

Hastening across it, we found ourselves after some distance, on the brink of the awful chasm through which flows the river of Datev, forming one of the wildest and most sublime of nature's scenes. Its depth from where we stood was at least 800 feet, though its narrowness prevented us from seeing the bottom. Its banks were the rugged and torn sides of precipitous mountains. The projecting perpendicular buttresses of the one opposite to us, were alternated with slightly sloping recesses, covered with sufficient soil to support a growth of forest trees, but which with its silvan load had in several places slid far down from its original bed. On one of these dislocated patches, appeared a small stone convent, which is affirmed by history, we were assured at Datev, to have migrated uninjured along with its foundation. Though so notable a miracle confirmed its sanctity, it seems to have frightened away all the monks, for it is now uninhabited.

This chasm we were to cross by descending to its very bottom, and ascending the opposite side. The commencement of our task was appalling. A sideling path con-

ducted us for nearly a hundred yards down the smooth surface of a rock, covered slightly with loose pebbles and inclined at an angle that caused our horses to slide much of the way, directly toward the edge of a precipice which formed the lower part of the bank below us. We trusted to the sure feet of our horses rather than our own, and got safely over it. Then winding around the base of a basaltic precipice, through a grove of stunted oaks strown with immense rocks long since detached from the ledge above, we came in sight of the convent we were seeking. It stood upon the very brink of the opposite bank, at a height perhaps even above us. From beside it, a silvery cascade bounded from rock to rock into the abyss below. In a sunny nook at the bottom appeared a little convent, with its fruit garden for the luxury of the parent one above. And contrasted with it just in the back ground, rose up a lofty mountain, now almost hidden from our view in a dreary snow-squall which occasionally scattered a few flakes upon us as an earnest of to-morrow.

The remainder of our descent, through bushes and over rocks, was still steep and hazardous, and to me not a little fatiguing. At the bottom, where we expected to ford a stream that had been murmuring in our ears, to our surprise none was to be found. It was hid from our view by a natural bridge, sixty or a hundred feet above it, apparently formed by some mighty convulsion which had dislocated huge masses of rock from the mountains above and choked up the chasm. Our situation on its top afforded no interesting view of it, and we amused ourselves at our Mohammedan muleteers, whose disappointment at finding no river, heightened into vexation by thirst, was increased to absolute rage by finding some twenty or thirty hogs, (the abomination of a moslem,) wallowing in the only accessible puddle, and grunting at them as they approached to drink. Had not the ceremonial and physical pollution of the swine,

however, prevented them from tasting, it would have been found unpalatable, for it came from a warm mineral spring, that issued from the top of the bridge. The only ascent from it was through a passage, scooped for two or three rods out of the perpendicular face of a solid rock, and so narrow and low that one of our loaded animals fell, and all were in the most imminent danger of being precipitated over the low balustrade to the very bottom of the ravine below. The remainder of the ascent, though steep and difficult for the poor animals, rather refreshed than fatigued us. We reached the convent of Datev at sunset, having rode 3 fúrsakhs from Karahoonch, and 6 from Degh.

We announced ourselves to two or three monks who were standing in the court of the convent, as American missionaries, or preachers; and a bishop soon came out to meet us with a welcome and his blessing, and conducted us to his room. A warm fire cheered, and an excellent cup of tea refreshed us, and it was immediately evident that no pains would be spared to make our visit agreeable. With a liberality hardly to be expected in a convent upon a fast day, two fowls were speedily prepared for our supper.

The bishop of Datev had died a few days before, but our host, his chorepiscopus who was acting in his place, gave us with readiness the information we wished. The see is named, from the ancient province in which it is situated, the see of Süník, and it was here that bishop Stephen, whose history of the Orpelians forms the foundation of Saint-Martin's learned Memoirs upon Armenia, exercised his functions. In the neighboring village, to which the convent has given its own name of Datev, there is still a family of meliks of that ancient race, descended probably from Eligoom the Orpelian, who, in the latter part of the twelfth century, received in this region such large estates from the Atabeg of Aderbajján.* The diocese of

* St. Mart. vol. 2: p. 103.

Süník now, according to our informant, besides dividing with that of Kántसार the province of Kara-bagh, embraces the province of Nakhcheván, and even extends across the Aras. It once contained 796 villages, but their number has been reduced by transportation to Persia, voluntary emigration to Turkey, and oppression at home, to 74, which are served by only 62 priests. There is no school in the whole diocese, except that some 20 lads from the neighboring villages are taught in this convent. The convent itself contains two bishops, ten vartabéds, and two deacons.

To our surprise the bishop not only knew the name of America, but repeated at some length and with tolerable accuracy the history of its discovery. He had read it some time before at Tifflís, probably from Robertson's History of America, which has been printed in Armenian. Like most others in the East who have inquired of me respecting America, he was more curious to be informed of the language, religion and character of the aborigines, than respecting ourselves. But he failed not to ask whether we all bore the name of Christians; and thus betrayed an almost equal ignorance of our present condition, with the lowest peasants. The inquiry was followed by numerous questions respecting our religious state, such as, whether we had churches, priests, &c. He seemed somewhat staggered to learn that we had no convents; and when we assured him that bishops among us are married, he was amazed, but, with the consenting voice of the whole circle of monks, pronounced the custom a good one. On learning that we had several thousand ministers of the gospel, and a still greater number of churches, they all stared with astonishment, and required no more to convince them of our Christianity or orthodoxy.

The name of the missionaries at Shoosha being mentioned, he was disposed to laugh at the idea of attempting to

convert moslems. Not one, he said, after so many years of labor had been converted; and indeed the extreme bigotry of Mohammedanism rendered the thing impossible. The same opinion, we told him, once prevailed in our own country respecting the conversion of the aborigines, but experiment had proved its incorrectness. Instances had occurred, also, of missionary efforts remaining fruitless for fifteen or twenty years, and then being crowned with complete success. But the Germans, we continued, are foreigners; you Armenians are the proper persons to undertake the work, as your constant intercourse with them, and your rights and privileges as citizens of Russia, give you great advantages. Rights and privileges! he replied; I will tell you what rights and privileges we have. When the Russians took the country, they gave to the Armenians many deserted moslem villages, where they consequently settled and built churches. But the moment their former occupants return from Persia, the Armenians are obliged to yield their claims and retire. In short, we have abundant evidence that the Russian laws give us no advantage over the moslems. We inquired if they had ever employed missionaries or their vartabéds to convert them. No, he replied, and if we attempted it what should we preach to them? They believe in God now, and have good prayers. We could only preach to them the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ. We reminded him that Christianity differs in many other very important points, from Mohammedanism. How superior, for example, is the heaven of the Bible to that of the Korán. His answer was; Why as to that, I will tell you what a vartabéd once said to a moslem. 'If I were sure that your paradise is a reality, I should wish to be there!' Shocked at such levity in a Christian bishop, and perceiving that we had by accident touched the wrong string for a convent, we were silent. We would gladly have continued the subject of missions, however, especially as it might

now lead us to speak of many important doctrines, but the fatigue of the day and the lateness of the hour obliged us to desist. Lodgings were assigned us where we had been sitting, and four of us, including the bishop, stretched ourselves upon the carpet to sleep, in a space hardly large enough to contain us.

Nov. 4. The bishop rose before light, at the sound of the convent bell, to attend the morning devotions of the church; but in his room neither in the evening nor in the morning was there any acknowledgment of divine providence, except in the asking of a blessing upon our food. That duty he seemed to consider as devolving of course upon him. It was done while he was looking around upon the company, and with so little reverence that my companion knew not what he was doing till he had half finished. My own experience in convent devotions prepared me to expect it, as a customary civility to strangers, and prevented me from being surprised, though not from being shocked, at such gross indecorum. As I have often witnessed elsewhere in similar circumstances, he wished us a good appetite at the close, without a pause or a change of tone, as if it formed the concluding sentence of his prayer. Family prayer, as practised by us, is believed to be unknown among the Armenians; and the same, it is feared, may be said also of private devotions. Not uncommonly, however, in these parts, one or more members of a family repeat, either individually or in concert, before lying down at night, so much as they can recollect of the long prayer of Nerses Shnorháli, which forms a part of the ninth service of the church. It is in fact the usual substitute for the whole of that service. If ignorance or disinclination prevent this formal attempt at prayer, a simple sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity, is the only act of devotion with which they commit themselves to the slumbers of the night. The same superstitious ceremony is believed, also,

to be their only mode of asking a blessing and returning thanks at table, unless an ecclesiastic is present to go through the mockery just described.

We delayed an hour or two in the morning to examine the convent. The cells of the monks, store rooms and stables, composing buildings of different ages and forms, surround a square court-yard, in which stands the church, the pride of the establishment. The traditions of the nation assert that the convent was founded by St. Eustathius, one of the seventy disciples who accompanied the apostle Thaddeus into Armenia, and derived from him its name of Datev, or Sdatev.* And the bishop this morning showed us a stone in the outer wall of the church with the number 58 upon it, as proof of its claim to that early origin. Still he did not attribute to the present church any greater age than 944 years; and allowed that it is not the oldest of the buildings now standing. It is in the style of architecture already described at Tiflís; its walls of hewn stone are of extreme solidity and thickness; and its arches and domes, and its proportions throughout, are grand and in good taste. Subsequent observation confirmed the assertion of the bishop, that its architecture is better than that of the church of Echmiádzin, and in fact we found it surpassed by no building in the country. It was almost destitute of the usual ornaments, having been plundered by the Persians in the last war; and several parts of its walls showed on the inner side marks of fires, built by the same invaders to deface or profane it. The monks were upon that occasion treated with great indignities; and the bishop just dead, after suffering many tortures, was carried captive to Tebriz. We inquired until we were weary for the library, and though repeatedly promised that it should be showed to us, we finally left without a sight of it.

Permit me to avail myself of this advantageous position

* Chamcheán, P. 3: c. 8.

to give you an account of the Armenian convents in general. A brief statement of the different orders of their inmates may serve as an introduction. In the Armenian clerical orders below the deacons, there are *four grades*, the occupants of which are named respectively, *porters, readers, adjurers* or *exorcists*, and *candle-holders*. All however are frequently embraced in the generic name of *clerk*, or in the common language *diratsoo*, which means, one designed for the priesthood, a candidate. Invert their order, and they exactly correspond with the *ordines minores* of the papal church, which are *acolythi, exorcistae, lectores,* and *ostiarii*. The duty of each respectively, is to open the doors of the church and prepare it for divine worship, to chant parts of the church service, to prepare the font for baptism, and to light and extinguish the candles. In other words, they act the part of the *anagnostes* in the Greek, and of the *clerk* in the English church. A bishop only can confer upon them their office, and he does it by prayer and the laying on of hands. But no vow of celibacy is connected with the ceremony, marriage either before or after it being subject only to the same rules as that of laymen; and every one is at liberty to throw off the ecclesiastical character he thus acquires, and to return to the world as if he had never had any duties in the church. These duties indeed are frequently performed in parishes by whomsoever the priests chance to invite, without their being previously consecrated; and generally, in fact, as we have already seen, they devolve upon boys. Persons occupying these grades are found in all convents, and are boys sent thither to be instructed and brought up. They cannot, of course, be considered monks, or permanent residents; though many of them ultimately take the vow of chastity.

The *fifth* and *sixth* grades are those of the *sub-deacon* and *deacon*. The duties of the former are, to dress the priest for mass, and to serve the deacon in his various du-

ties. Candidates for the deaconship usually remain, however, so short a time in this grade, that it has virtually become almost extinct. The duties of the deacon, are to serve the priest at the mass, by bringing to him the cup and wafer to be consecrated, by reading the Gospel, &c. This grade too is little known except in convents and cities. In country parishes candidates usually pass immediately on to the priesthood. Both can be conferred only by the laying on of the hands of the bishop and prayer. No one can marry after entering the first, nor can he go back to the rank of layman. All sub-deacons and deacons in convents, therefore, are to be classed among their regular and permanent inhabitants. In nunneries an order of deaconesses, likewise, is said to be known, who read prayers for the inmates of those establishments. No other deaconesses are found in the church.

The *seventh* grade is that of *priest*; preparatory to which the six preceding must have been passed through, though the time of remaining in them is not fixed, and all may be, and often are passed in a day. The *parish priests* will be spoken of elsewhere. Only those who are unmarried on entering the grade of sub-deacon, and of course become by that act bound to a life of celibacy, come within the scope of my present object. They constitute the *monastic priesthood*, and are always connected with convents. Their distinctive name is *vartabéd*; though that title is vulgarly applied also to all the inhabitants of convents who wear the conical hood, whether in priest's or bishop's orders. It signifies a *doctor* or *teacher*, and is indicative of their peculiar business. For they, in distinction from the parish clergy, are the *preachers* of the church. That duty, however, devolves principally upon the highest of the three grades into which they are subdivided. The lowest are merely unmarried priests; and though honored with

the title of vartabéd, are never called to the important duties which it implies.

The *eighth* grade is that of *bishop*. Those who are admitted to it are always selected from the vartabéds, and are of course invariably unmarried. Their special duty is to ordain the seven grades below them; they being themselves ordained only by the Catholicos. They are subdivided into many different ranks of honor and office, among which are the chorepiscopi, who act as aids and colleagues to diocesan bishops; archbishops, a name applied to almost all who have dioceses; and patriarchs, who are clothed with authority by the civil government over a large extent of country. Many common bishops besides are to be found, who have no dioceses, and were ordained with no prospect of any, but discharge merely the duties of common monks. All, of whatever rank, reside in convents, and are to be classed among their inhabitants.—The *ninth* grade is that of *Catholicos*, of which we shall take a nearer view at Echmiádzin.

Lay monks form no part of the Armenian monastic system. Now and then indeed an anchorite is to be found, and more frequently other individuals make a vow to reside for a time in a convent. But their mode of life, and the length of their continuance in it, both remain subject only to their individual choice. Laymen bound by vows to perpetual celibacy, subjected to the laws of regular monastic orders, and attached for life to convents, are not, so far as we have been able to learn, at present known among the Armenians.

An interesting question, suggested by this view of the orders of the Armenian clergy, demands here a moment's attention. What more general classification of the nine grades now enumerated, is recognized by the Armenians? The secretary of the Catholicos, one of the most intelligent of the vartabéds at Echmiádzin, replied to this

question, that all the clergy belong either to the *deaconhood* or *priesthood*, i. e. either to the class which can, or to that which cannot, say mass; and he denied that any *triple* classification is recognized. Two of the most intelligent bishops we have found, firmly denied the propriety of any classification into less than *seven* divisions; which are the seven lower grades, the bishops and catholicos being considered only as branches of the seventh grade or priesthood, differing in dignity. And the leading vartabéds of one convent assented to the idea, that all above deacons are merely priests of different dignity. Only one individual, an old bishop at Echmiádzin, admitted three general orders; and he knew not in which of them some of the grades should be classed. Indeed, the idea seemed to have been first suggested to him by our question, and to have pleased him from its analogy to Paul's triple division of heaven, the reason he assigned for admitting a triple classification of the clergy. If we say there is an essential difference between the priest and the bishop, because the latter only can ordain the former, we must admit, for the same reason, as essential a difference between the bishop and the Catholicos. If we go to the ordination ceremony of each grade, and regard its essence as consisting in the laying on of hands, as its name in Armenian imports, we can make no general classification, for each of the nine grades is conferred by the imposition of hands. If anointing with oil be regarded as the essential part of ordination, we shall then leave out the first six grades entirely, and have the priests, bishops, and Catholicos for the three cardinal orders, since they and they only are anointed with meirón at ordination. The tonsure cannot be regarded as an essential part of ordination in any case among the Armenians, though it is customarily performed upon those who are admitted to one of the four lowest grades. A shaven crown is often seen among the common people.

The primary design of convents was to promote the piety of their inmates, by enabling them to renounce the world and spend a life of devotion and holy meditation. As a secondary object, they have sometimes aided in the work of education, and the promotion of science. The first idea springs from an entirely mistaken view of the nature of man and of Christianity, and we are therefore not surprised at its complete failure. Probably not an instance can be found in Armenia, where the retirement of a convent is improved for purposes of devotion. Instead of being retreats from the passions that agitate the world, convents are the very centres of the most unprincipled ambition, of the darkest intrigue, and of the bitterest envy. Their history is but a tissue of quarrelling and dissension. Erected for purposes of selfdenial, no where, so often as in them, is the question asked, "What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed?" If the funds are at hand, no one, sooner than a monk, furnishes himself with good dinners and splendid robes. Under the veil of celibacy, is covered every species of unchastity. Of this so thoroughly are even the common people convinced, that no man, we were assured, puts confidence in the continence of a vartabéd in his intercourse with his family. So infamous is Echmiádzin for unnatural vice, that we heard it assigned as the reason for its having no school. Parents are reluctant to send their sons thither. In a word, they are 'holds of every foul spirit, and cages of every unclean and hateful bird.' They can, of course, exert no good influence upon the religion of the people. According to the rules of the Armenian church, indeed, monastic priests are never allowed to have charge of a parish. With only occasional exceptions, therefore, they say mass, confess, &c. merely in convents, where they are expected always to reside. The special duty of the high vartabéds is to preach; and instances have been known of their going

through the country, in the discharge of it, not only without orders from their superiors, but even under their persecuting opposition. But, alas! no such instances now exist. They preach only when ordered by the bishops. The object of their orders will appear when we speak of the diocesans.

Instead of contributing to enlighten their nation by schools, or the publication of books, or, which is the least that should be expected of them, serving as seminaries for the education of the clergy, the convents of Armenia are themselves seats of great ignorance. The deacons, who are supposed to occupy in them the place of learners, instead of being kept to their studies, are employed in the fields, or in going on errands, or in other menial services for the monks, so as generally to get no more than one or two lessons in a week, and in some cases none at all. Hence, when advanced to the grade of vartabéd, they have very little knowledge at the best, and sometimes are hardly able to read. They are indeed required by the canons to be acquainted with the Scriptures, and to believe what the fathers of their church have taught, which implies that they have read them; but very few in fact have done so, or are acquainted with the ancient language in which they are written. The vartabéds themselves very rarely study or read at all, and are therefore advanced to the episcopate in the same state of ignorance. In a word, visit the library of any convent, and you would almost be persuaded that none of the monks are aware that the books it contains were made to be read. The solitary old vartabéd of St. Hagóp, already mentioned, is an honorable exception to the general indifference of his brethren to their own and their countrymen's intellectual improvement. In the convent of Seván, too, there is a vartabéd who devotes himself to teaching. But these are only glimmering tapers in a starless night of ignorance.

To complete our view of the Armenian monastic clergy, a few remarks need to be added upon *diocesan bishops*, who also, when practicable, always reside in convents. Being selected from the mass of bishops with which all the large convents are stocked, more through the influence of intrigue, money, or respectability of family, than out of regard to real merit, they are apt to be as ignorant as their companions, and sometimes actually know little or nothing of the ancient language, or of the books contained in it. A young wekeel of intelligence and education supplies their deficiencies, and transacts their business. Their habits and moral character are not known to differ at all from those of the other inhabitants of convents. One was not long since sent from Echmiádzin to a neighboring diocese, to act as colleague to an aged bishop, who had reached his dotage. He first beat the old man into a disclosure of his treasures, and then forced him to leave his diocese entirely. Two vartabéds died suddenly soon after, as if by poison; and the new bishop, with a haughty contempt of public opinion, carried his dissoluteness to the extent of keeping mistresses openly in his convent. The people at last made their complaints to be heard by government, and he was recalled to Echmiádzin. Love of gain and of pleasure is rarely carried by bishops, it is true, to this excess of open violence and debauchery; but with hardly an exception, they use every practicable quiet method of fleecing their flocks, as may be seen by a view of their sources of income.

A diocesan's establishment consists of all the inmates of the convent in which he resides, and he is believed to have no purse distinct from its general treasury. Taking into the account, therefore, that all its expences are drawn from his resources, we may reckon his *first* source of income to be the funds of his convent. Convents are generally possessed of property, in lands, tenants and live stock, which

affords the only support of their inmates, unless the residence of a bishop, or the possession of some object of pilgrimage gives them other resources. The convent of Datev owns sixteen villages, including that of Datev itself, from which it received under the Persian government both the capitation and the land taxes. The whole of the former, and half of the latter, is now claimed by the Russian emperor. Still, the convent is supposed to have derived from them in 1830, about 500 chetverts (150,000 lbs.) of grain.—A *second* source of income is ordination fees. No bishop, it is believed, ordains a priest without pay. The bishop of Kántsasar will ordain no one for less than fifty silver roubles, (about \$37.50,) and whoever will contribute that sum is pretty sure to receive the imposition of his hands. The bishop of Datev also demands fifty, or at the least twenty-five silver roubles. Such universal simony, besides converting the episcopate into an office for the sale of benefices, introduces the most unworthy men into the sacred profession, and multiplies the priests far beyond the number which can be so supported as to leave them free for the duties of their profession.—The *third* is marriage fees. No person can marry without a license from his bishop, for which in ordinary cases he must pay, in this vicinity, a silver rouble, (about 75 cts.) And besides, the church has so multiplied the prohibited degrees of affinity, as to leave a man but a very limited circle from which to select his wife, unless he infringe upon some canon, and an extra sum only will obtain the necessary license to do that.* A widower, moreover, can take a virgin only by paying his bishop well for the forbidden privilege; nothing

* The Jesuit missionaries say, that in the Armenian church, marriage between persons related by blood to the fourth degree, by marriage to the third degree, by spiritual adoption, (standing sponsors at baptism,) to the third degree, and by legal adoption to the second degree, is forbidden. See Lett. Ed. et Cur.

but a handsome present will render a third marriage legal; and the expence of a fourth can be borne only by the very rich.—The *fourth* is the inheritance of all who die childless. At the death of every man something usually goes to the bishop. If a man die without children, real or adopted, he claims his whole estate, except a seventh which falls to the widow.—The *fifth* is from the death of priests. All the clothes and furniture of a deceased priest go at once to the bishop. Then, in this vicinity, fifteen silver roubles are demanded for the funeral sacrifice, which however the bishop never makes, but pockets the money. And besides, he exacts four and a half silver roubles for the grave, and the same sum for the burial service. Reflect now that the priests are perhaps never freeholders, and you will see that the bishops get nearly or quite all their estates.—They receive, also, by means of charity-boxes in the churches, and through other mediums, occasional contributions from the people. And in some parts of Turkey they regularly sell each parish to its priest for a stipulated price per annum, besides claiming a fixed per-centage of all baptismal and other fees. That such is their practice in Armenia, I cannot affirm. In fact, you must regard this view of the income of bishops as imperfect; the particular sums, especially, are probably true of only one or two dioceses.

You will ask, what spiritual services do the diocesans render their people, in return for so much money extracted from them? It is said that they sometimes preach upon special occasions, but we heard of no instance, except at Tebriz. They sometimes send out their vartabéds to preach, and make visitations as their vicars, but very rarely, and then only to collect contributions. Not an instance is known where a bishop keeps his vartabéds preaching for the instruction of his charge. So that, instead of hearing the gospel proclaimed, the people rarely listen to a sermon, the sole object of which is not, to get money. If ever the bishop

makes a visitation of his diocese in person, it has the same pecuniary object. The result is, that his approach, or that of his vicar, is looked upon as a great calamity. As confirmation, however, in the Armenian church, devolves not upon bishops, and as ordination, their principal duty, can be done in their convents, they never, in these parts, trouble themselves with personally visiting their dioceses.

With such a view of the character of the bishops of Armenia before you, you will be sorry that I am obliged to add, that their influence over the minds of the people is very great. In some instances, indeed, the voice of the laity is sufficiently loud to overrule their wishes, but they are extremely rare. Ignorance and superstition are generally too prevalent, to allow resistance or disobedience to be thought of. The respect yielded to them, however, is the effect of fear rather than of esteem. With them is lodged the tremendous power of excommunication, which is believed both to shut the gates of heaven effectually against all who incur its anathemas, and to bring along with it the severest temporal judgment upon their persons and property.

I am happy to close these remarks upon the monasticism of Armenia, by assuring you that it is on the decline. A new convent was not heard of or seen by us, in any part of that country; but in every province the ruins of old ones were numerous. While only the three already mentioned in Kará-bagh are inhabited, five have gone to decay. And the province of Eriván, which 150 years ago contained twenty-three for men and five for women,* now has but ten, among which are no nunneries. Indeed, the only Armenian nunneries we heard of any where, are the two small establishments at Tiflís and Shoosha.

* Chardin, vol. 2: p. 177.

LETTER XIII.

FROM DATEV TO NAKHCHEVAN.

Village of Datev—Lor—Substitute for ovens and fireplaces—An evening conversation—The Armenian parish clergy—Their appointment—Qualifications—Habits and character—Duties—Incomes—Former state of Lor—Low diet of the common people—Condition of the Armenian females—Beautiful winter scenery—Sisiyán—Hospitality of the mountaineers—Reception at Shaghád—Observance of the Sabbath—Attendance on public worship—Descent from the mountains—Selasíz—Commencement of Persian manners—Arrival at Nakhcheván.

DEAR SIR,

WE left the convent of Datev, at 10 A. M. on the morning of the 4th of November, my last date. The bishop accompanied us to the village of Datev, about a mile distant, whither he was going to attend the last of the first eight masses said for the soul of his deceased superior. It contains according to one informant 50, and according to another 80 houses. As we stopped only a moment for a guide, we had no opportunity to examine it. A rain that had been drizzling all the morning, now became a driving snow storm, which completely impeded our prospect the remainder of our ride. With difficulty we climbed a mountain ridge, where the snow was already of considerable depth, and the wind and cold oppressive; and then, by a declivity fearfully steep, descended into the bottom of a deep confined valley, where we found the quiet village of Lor, at 2 P. M.

Our muleteers, not at all to our dissatisfaction, refused on account of the storm to go farther, although we had

rode but two fúrsakhs; and we called upon the kakhia for lodgings. He welcomed us hospitably to his own family room. It was under ground, like all the houses of these mountains, and lighted only by an open sky-light in the centre, through which the snow was continually falling. In different parts, piles of grain were heaped upon the ground, which formed the floor. Here a deep wicker basket plastered with mud and cow-dung, answered the purpose of a flour-barrel; there was a large chest of bread, the principal food of the family. In a dark corner was a pile of carpets, mattresses, cushions and coverlets for their accommodation at night; and in another direction stood a cradle, with its crying contents.

What attracted our attention most this stormy day, was the apparatus for warming us. It was the species of oven called *tannoor*, common throughout Armenia and also in Syria, but converted here for purposes of warmth into what is called a *tandoor*. A cylindrical hole is sunk about three feet in the ground in some part of the room, with a flue entering it at the bottom to convey a current of air to the fire which heats it. For the emission of smoke no other provision is made than the open sky-light in the terrace. When used for baking bread, the dough, being flattened to the thickness of common pasteboard perhaps a foot and a half long by a foot broad, is stuck to its smooth sides by means of a cushion upon which it is first spread. It indicates, by cleaving off, when it is done, and being then packed down in the family chest, it lasts at least a month in the winter and ten days in the summer. Such is the only bread known in the villages of Armenia; and even the cities of Eriván and Tebriz offer no other variety than a species perhaps only twice as thick, and so long that it might almost be sold by the yard. To bake it, the bottom of a large oven is covered with pebbles, (except one corner where a fire is kept constantly burning,) and

upon them when heated, the sheets of dough are spread. The convenience of such thin bread, where knives and forks are not used and spoons are rare, is that a piece of it doubled enables you to take hold of a mouthful of meat more delicately than with your bare fingers; or, when properly folded, helps you to convey a spoonful safely to your mouth to be eaten with the spoon itself. When needed for purposes of warmth, the tannoor is easily transformed into a tandoor. A round stone is laid upon the mouth of the oven, when well heated, to stop the draught; a square frame about a foot in height is then placed above it; and a thick coverlet, spread over the whole, lies upon the ground around it, to confine the warmth. The family squat upon the floor, and warm themselves by extending their legs and hands into the heated air beneath it, while the frame holds, as occasion requires, their lamp or their food. Its economy is evidently great. So full of crevices are the houses, that an open fireplace must consume a great quantity of fuel, and then almost fail of warming even the air in its immediate vicinity. The tandoor, heated once or at the most twice in twenty-four hours by a small quantity of fuel, keeps one spot continually warm for the relief of all numb fingers and frozen toes.

Seated in the family circle with our host, his wife and children, and a few neighbors, around the tandoor, we passed an interesting evening. He was the son of one of the priests of the village, was a sober-minded thinking man, and possessed much more information than one would expect to find in such a place. His own inclination gave the conversation a serious turn, and to prove or illustrate the various topics discussed, he brought forth and frequently referred to the *family Bible*; a treasure which we found in no other instance in Armenia, and even here perhaps an unwillingness to think that it does not exist, rather than the real circumstances of the case, induce me

to use the name. It was a quarto printed at Moscow and given by the missionaries at Shoosha to the father of our host; and though in the ancient dialect, we found him able to understand it, and somewhat acquainted with its contents. His seriousness made him a promising subject for missionary instruction; and that his candor was encouraging, may be shown by the effect which only one passage of Scripture had upon his mind. Having learned from Antonio that bishops in our country are married, he appealed to us with the greatest astonishment, for the reason of so uncanonical a practice. We simply referred him to 1 Tim. 3: 2. After examining it attentively, his astonishment was completely reversed, and he asked us with quite as great anxiety, why the Armenian church had forbidden the custom. We replied, that in the face of such plain passages of Scripture we could not be responsible for its decisions, and he must ask his own bishops the reason of them.

Finding that the conversation had continued, before we were aware, to a late hour, we apologized for breaking in upon his hours of sleep. But he assured us that neither he nor his family were at all incommoded, for his father sometimes entertained them till almost morning by reading and religious conversation. This declaration, added to the character which the old gentleman had impressed upon his son, made us extremely regret that his having gone to the mass at Datev, and being prevented by the storm from returning, deprived us of an opportunity of seeing him. Our host assigned us our lodgings for the night upon carpets around the four sides of the tandoor; where, warmed by its heat and the furs in which we wrapped ourselves, we slept comfortably until morning, while he with his wife and children lay down a few feet distant.

Being himself the son of a priest, the kakhia gave us some important information respecting the *secular* or *parish*

priesthood, which you will allow me to combine with what we obtained from other sources and present to you here, while what I have said upon the monastic orders is fresh in your recollection.—Their *appointment* rests with the inhabitants of the village where they officiate, and of which they are almost always themselves natives. The laity are entitled to a voice in the affairs of the church in some other respects, but their rights seem never to have been reduced to any regular form, either by law or custom. No committees are appointed, and when a question occurs which seems to require the opinion of his people, the priest merely calls perhaps a few of the acknowledged leaders of his parish to the church door after service, for the purpose of consultation. The right of electing their own priests the laity universally exercise, and rarely, if ever, does a bishop attempt to interfere with it, by imposing upon them one without their request, or contrary to it. The inhabitants of a town or village fix upon some one of their number, pay his ordination fee to the bishop, and he of course becomes their priest. Should the Armenian church ever engage in the struggles of a reformation, this invaluable right, being already in their possession, will not be one of the many for which the laity will have to contend. Its value seems now, however, to be extremely small. Not even do the people avail themselves of it to reduce their priests to the moderate number which they can respectably support. The proportion of priests in the villages, will average at least one to every fifty families; in the towns, it is somewhat less. I must add, too, that though their election rests with the people, their bishop has the power of deposing them at will; and the apprehension of such an event makes them perfectly submissive to the nod of the higher clergy.

Of their *qualifications* the most important in its practical bearing is marriage. So cautiously do the regulations of

the church guard against allowing an unmarried clergy to have the cure of souls, that they require every parish priest not only to be married, but to have one child, before he is ordained; and if a priest's wife dies, he is at once to retire to a convent. The latter regulation, however, is not strictly executed in case of great age, and where under Turkish law the ecclesiastical authorities are but imperfectly obeyed. A priest thus become a widower and admitted to a convent, takes the rank of *vartabéd*, and is admissible to the highest ecclesiastical grades. The age requisite for admission to priest's orders is twenty-five; but we are not certain that this regulation is not frequently dispensed with. The least literary and doctrinal qualifications required by law, are that candidates shall be acquainted with the Scriptures, and be orthodox in sentiment. But in practice, the former is never exacted, nor the latter indeed any farther than that they assent by proxy to the question whether they believe in the right creed, without being made to repeat it. The only education which is actually required as necessary, is an ability to read. To know how to write is not deemed essential, and in some cases at least is actually dispensed with. Much less is a knowledge of the language in which the church books are written demanded. In a word, the priests are often below the common standard of respectability in talent and education.

Of the *habits* and *character* of the parish priesthood, we can give you, with some important exceptions, (of which we were encouraged to hope the father of our host might be one,) but a bad account. They make no effort to improve their own minds, nor those of their people, in literary or religious knowledge; but are given to indolence and the pleasures of the table. A share of the sacrifices being part of their income, they are of course invited to them all, and their very profession thus leads them to be gormandizers and hard drinkers. It is affirmed that an

Armenian priest will drink twenty bottles of wine at a feast! The report seems incredible even in the vicinity of the wine-bibbing Georgians and Mingrelians; still its very existence, though false, shows that the evil is not a slight one. The temptation is so strong, that young men of good habits before entering the profession, have been observed to give way to it, and soon assimilate themselves to the common character of the priesthood, which is decidedly lower than that of the generality of the laity. While we were at Shoosha, a priest once went to evening prayers so intoxicated, that he fell to quarrelling with the people who had assembled, until they were obliged to thrust him out of the church, and go home with their prayers unsaid. The occurrence made some talk for a day or two, but was soon forgotten as no very strange thing; and the vartabéd, who as wekeel of the catholicos just at that time degraded another priest for sending his children to the missionary school, did not regard it as worthy of attention.—With such a view of the qualifications and character of the priests before you, you need hardly be told that their *influence* is very small. They are not respected, and their reproofs are but little regarded, not being backed, like those of the higher clergy, by the dreaded power of excommunication.

In looking at the *duties* of the Armenian parish priests we must pass over preaching entirely. That belongs to the vartabéds. We heard indeed of two or three priests, (and they were not more than two or three,) who attempt it, but it is considered rather as an extra service, than as devolving upon them by the obligation of their office. Their routine of duty lies in the performance of the church services, in confessing, baptizing, marrying, burying, and the like. Of the church services, the *celebration of mass* is the principal, and is in fact the distinctive business of their office.

For we shall not get a correct idea of the priesthood of the Armenian, any more than of the Romish church, until we leave the New Testament ministry entirely, and go back to the old dispensation. Like the Jewish priesthood, they are designed to offer gifts and sacrifices for the sins of the people, and that is done by the supposed sacrifice of Christ in the celebration of mass. Even the customs of that dispensation are imitated in some of the observances of ceremonial purity. In order to prevent the contamination which might otherwise result, and which would entirely disqualify him for so holy a duty, the priest is bound by the canons to separate himself from his family and sleep in the church for fifteen nights previous to saying mass. He then says mass fifteen days; and remains fifteen days afterward before joining his family. During the first and the last fifteen days, he makes wafers for the mass, baptizes, administers the viaticum, and the like. When the priests are few, which happens in all villages and in some towns, these rules, of course, cannot be strictly adhered to; but even then the priests are supposed to sleep in a separate room in their houses. As an initiation to this system of segregation, every priest is obliged, immediately after his ordination, to fast forty days, shut up in the church or some room connected with it, and eating but once a day.

The *income* of the priests is derived entirely from perquisites. We could not learn that any church in this region has funds or glebes, and our informant to-night assured us that if they had, the convents would take possession of them. In some parts of Turkey the churches are indeed rich; but even there their income, so far as we have learned, is not appropriated to the support of the priests, but to the purchase of candles and other ornaments. Rarely, if ever, do the clergy engage personally in the labors of the field, in any trade, or in merchandize. Though in the latter, perhaps, they sometimes vest their funds through the

agency of another, and in the former their children and hired men are often employed to increase the revenue yielded by sources properly clerical. One of these sources is baptism. For it the priest receives, in this vicinity, from one to three penabáds.* Another is marriage, which yields him a silver rouble. A third is the burial of the dead; for which he is paid, according to circumstances, from a penabád to two silver roubles; besides receiving whatever the sympathies of friends may deposit in a plate that is placed upon the breast of the dead as they go to kiss the cross by his side at the funeral. For confession nothing is directly charged. But whenever an individual goes to the communion, which is of course immediately after confession, he finds the Gospel and a plate placed by his confessor at the church door, one of which he kisses, and in the other deposits a sum of money, perhaps less than a penabád. Or, according to another custom, each confessor receives an extra sum from his parishioners during the fifteen days of his turn for saying mass, either deposited upon a plate that is carried around the church, or given to him privately at his room. Masses for the dead always procure for the officiator a small sum of money, perhaps a penabád, besides his share of the sacrifice that usually accompanies them. Simple prayers are said gratis for the deceased friends of the poor, and a donation is expected only from the rich. For blessing the houses of his parishioners, also, which he does at Christmas and at Easter, the priest receives perhaps half a penabád. In some places, also, where the ceremony consists in saying prayers over bread and salt, while the salt is thrown into the cistern, and one loaf left for the fam-

* The particular *sums* here given were mentioned to us in the villages of Kara-bagh. They vary in different places, and can furnish only a very conjectural estimate of the amount of a priest's income. The same *items*, it is believed, are paid for every where. The *penabád* is about 15 cts. and the *rouble* about 75 cts.

ily, a second loaf falls to him. The only thing that looks like a regular salary in this system of clerical support is, that some churches have a permanent box for contributions to the priest, and in some villages he receives a small quantity of grain from his parishioners.

How lamentable must be the effect, both upon priest and people, of doling out thus in retail the services of religion. It makes every morsel of spiritual food almost as much an article of merchandize and barter, as is the meat that is sold in the market for the nourishment of the body. And besides, so far as anti-scriptural ceremonies are sources of profit, it must set the priesthood in opposition to missionary efforts, for those efforts touch directly their most sensitive part, the purse. You will recollect, in conclusion, how much of the amount thus scraped together in pittances by the priests from the laboring people, is poured at their decease into the laps of the monastic clergy, to be hoarded up in golden church ornaments and costly clerical robes, or to be expended in the support of useless indolence.

Nov. 5. A heavy fall of snow continuing the whole day, prevented our departure, and confined our observations to the *village* and the *family*.—The village in former times was populous, but when Nadir Shah vented his rage upon this province for its rebellion, every soul emigrated to Constantinople. After forty years of desolation, its present inhabitants obtained permission from the khan of Shoosha to rebuild it as his tenants. They number only twelve houses, and are served by two priests, who have also charge of two other neighboring villages of fifteen houses each. One of them, the father of our host, teaches five children. The appearance of the church confirmed this historical tradition. Its size, the thickness and solidity of its walls of stone, and the proportions of its arches within, placed it decidedly before any village church we had seen. It seemed built for ages, and stood up in striking contrast to the under-ground cabins

of the villages ; though, like them, its scanty furniture and ornaments presented marks of poverty. Local tradition says, it was built by a merchant who was a native of the place, in the time of Shah Abbas. An inscription over the door places the date of its erection 174 years ago, when, according to our informant, the village contained 300 families.

The extreme abstemiousness of the family of our host, though fairly representing the diet of the Armenian peasants generally, would be considered almost the extreme of starvation by our well-fed countrymen, among whom the very paupers live better than the respectable farmers of Armenia. No meal was cooked, and, it being Friday, dry sheets of bread taken at the pleasure of each individual from the family chest, and raw onions torn from strings suspended around the room, formed the only food that was eaten. The spareness of this diet was indeed greater than it would have been on any other than a fast day. But you must recollect, that, there being more than 150 such days in a year, nearly the half of an Armenian's life is spent upon fasting food, which cannot in his native country afford him a much greater variety. For so strict are the canons of his church, and the general practice of his nation, that no animal food of any kind is eaten ; olive oil, even if in imitation of his less strict brethren of Constanti-nople he might venture to use it, is too scarce and too dear for him to obtain ; and, except perhaps a little oil of sesame, his only resort for a greater variety than bread and onions, is to rice and beans, with a few culinary vegetables, and, in places favorable for its growth, some species of fruit. Nor on other days is the table of an Armenian peasant much more plentifully supplied. Flesh of any kind he rarely tastes ; and the productions of the field, the garden and the dairy, appearing in the simple form of bread and cheese or yoghoort, with the addition of an onion

or a raw turnip, and an occasional dish of rice or beans, form almost his whole living.

We generally broke in upon this abstemiousness, by ordering a few boiled eggs or a fowl to be added to our piláv of rice. And in the morning and evening a cup of coffee or tea, articles never used by the peasants of Armenia, was sometimes prepared from our own stores, and being shared with our host helped to increase his hospitality. This evening, just as our table was about to be spread upon the tandoor, the melik of the neighboring village of Pernaghoot entered and seated himself in the circle. In despite of the canons of his church, he accepted our invitation to partake with us, and no less in despite of government espionage, he indulged himself, as he plunged his hands in the piláv and jointed the chicken with his fingers, in complaints of the semi-barbarism of the Russians. His treatment of both church and state was to us equally inexplicable, in this land where so few venture even to think in opposition to either.

Our host's wife, like most of the women in the mountains of Kará-bagh, was unveiled. But her chin, in the usual style, was swaddled in an enormous muffler reaching to her nose, and a white cloth passing over from her forehead flowed down upon her shoulders behind. She spoke not a loud word from the time we entered the house. If occasion required her to address a person too distant for a very low whisper to be heard, her little daughter stood by her side, and listening to her whispers, expressed her wishes aloud. Such is the etiquette of female modesty in the presence of strangers, not only here, but extensively among the Armenians. It applies, however, only to the younger women; as we had to-day abundant evidence. For some old ladies of the neighborhood, who happened to call, were not prevented by it, nor by the still greater obstacle of their mufflers, from almost stunning us with their chatter.

The condition of the Armenian females, as you will have inferred from what I have already said of their education, is not a little degraded. They are regarded as inferiors by the other sex, and as made only for their pleasure and service. From the idea that their virtue depends upon restraint, rather than upon principle, an idea probably not far from correct in their present circumstances, they are excluded from the society of the men, and never take a part in the entertainment of visitors, except very intimate family friends. Indeed they are rarely left alone, and are allowed to go abroad but little. The difficulty of obtaining female servants and pupils at Shoosha, shows an extreme of jealousy, on this point. Probably it is much greater in towns than in the country. The marriage contract is made by the parents independently of the parties concerned. Girls are often espoused as early as three or four years of age; and many are married at twelve. The earliest period at which marriage is allowed by the rules of the church to be consummated, is ten for girls, and fourteen for boys. The matrimonial tie is never dissolved except by death. For, neither in the canons of the church, nor in practice, is any other divorce known, than that termed by the papists *divortium quoad torum*, which gives the separated parties no liberty to contract another marriage. The relation which the wife sustains to the husband, is that of a servant, rather than of a companion. To give counsel and express opinions, though she sometimes does it pretty loudly, is not considered her department. She is managed more by commands than by advice, and not unfrequently is the rod called in to aid. Her influence is little felt in the family, until she has children to take her part. Even they respect her but little till she arrives at extreme old age; then she is sometimes greatly venerated. This degradation of females, and the consequent separation of the sexes in society, has a most

deleterious influence upon the habits of both. Without that mutually chastening influence, which in civilized life the presence of each has upon the conversation of the other, the common language of both degenerates to the very lowest degree of indecent vulgarity, and the parties of the men are converted into bacchanalian carousals.

Nov. 6. The storm passed away in the night, and a morning without clouds unveiled to us the grandeur of the mountain scenery, that shuts out from the world the deep and quiet valley, where we had found a refuge from the blasts of the last two days. A drapery of virgin white snow veiled every part to the top of the highest peaks, and, as the sun rose above the horizon, they were brilliantly gilded by his rays. The bracing influence of a frosty atmosphere, in which the thermometer stood at 23° , gave elasticity to our spirits, and enabled us to drink in the full effect of the grandeur and beauty that surrounded us. With an affectionate farewell from our host, we started at 9 and a quarter A. M. and following the valley through a few windings, soon passed the two little hamlets already alluded to. The shepherds were just conducting forth their flocks to browse upon the shrubs and weeds that peered up through the snow, while their fleecy backs afforded a warm and undisturbed footing to a species of magpie, which in these parts dares to face the severity of winter. In ascending the mountain beyond, the horse that carried our chief muleteer, failing by reason of the snow to secure a firm foot-hold in the narrow path, fell, and turned many a somerset as he rolled over and over down the rocky declivity, till arrested by a rock more prominent than the rest some fifty or a hundred feet below. Possessed of the exceeding hardiness of the horses of this region, however, he sustained no permanent injury, and the incident only served to make us more sensible of the danger to which we had been exposed in the passage of the river of Datev on the 3d. On the summit

we found a grove of stunted oaks, the last forest trees we passed on these mountains, and in fact the last we saw in travelling not far from 800 miles in different directions afterward, till we were beyond Erzroom again on our return to Constantinople!

Descending into a broad valley beyond, we passed through a small Armenian hamlet, and a quarter before 3 P. M. observed in a branch of the valley not far to the left, the village of Sisiyán. It was at the foot of an isolated hill, on the top of which were probably the ruins of an old fortress; though the term *kúlaah* (fortress), applied to it by our guide, might mean merely natural rocks upon its summit. It is the principal place in the district, and both its name and position seem to indicate that it is a relic of the ancient Sisagán, which was one of the most important cantons of the province of Süník.* It is inhabited in part by moslems; and I ought to observe, that though since leaving Shoosha we have stopped only in Armenian villages, there are many moslems scattered through these mountains.

As we passed near the large village of Pernaghoot some distance beyond, six or eight men came out and invited us to spend the night with them, urging with much importunity that it was wintry weather, and that we should certainly be benighted in the open air on the mountains; as would have been the case, had we taken the direct road, there being no village on it for several fúrsakhs. This was the finishing touch to the uniform hospitality we had experienced since leaving Shoosha. In no case had we found the least occasion to show the commandant's order for guides and lodgings; for the former were always ready to accompany us for a trifling compensation, and those with whom we lodged, after giving us a welcome reception, in every case were thankful for the gratuity of two or three

* St. Mart. vol. I: p. 144.

penabáds, (30 or 40 cts.) for a day's food and a night's lodging for us all. We now declined the kind hospitality of our unknown friends, in order that, by pushing on a fúr-sakh or two farther to another village a little off the road, we might shorten somewhat the next day's ride.

On entering Shaghád the village in question, 6 fúrsakhs from Lor, we were assailed with a deafening jargon of clamorous voices from all directions, the import of which was, that we were fools for passing the good accommodations of Pernaghoot and coming where not a room could be found to shelter us. By dint of reasoning, scolding, and promising, however, of which the last had evidently the greatest effect, and after being shown into one or two stables where the stench was almost suffocating, we obtained a room which was in fact a whole house entirely to ourselves. Now the tone was entirely changed. When once fairly under the wing of our host, nothing was too much for him do for us. Mats and carpets were brought to cover the ground. His wife came specially to cook the piláv before our eyes, that it might be done to our taste; an attention, by the way, which we would gladly have dispensed with, for, there being no fireplace but the cylindrical oven, and no chimney to that, the smoke almost suffocated us. In the absence of oil and candles, butter was placed in a dish to give us light. And a frame and an old rug were borrowed from a neighbor to make us a tandoor. We were glad to be relieved from the necessity of changing the good opinion we had formed of the hospitality of the people of Kara-bagh, by learning that this village had emigrated from Khoy in Persia, at the close of the last war. The reception they gave us was truly Persian. They amounted to about 30 houses, and had one church and one priest.

Nov. 7. All the precautions taken by our host to make us comfortable, proved an ineffectual defence from the cold,

which increased to such a degree in the night, that at sunrise our thermometer stood at only one degree above zero, and perhaps would have sunk lower, had it had sufficient range. Our house, instead of being, in the style of Karabagh, half buried snugly in the side of a hill and covered with a warm mound of earth, was composed, as is common in the warmer regions beyond the mountains, of four naked walls and a thin terrace, so easily penetrated by the cold, that with only the imperfect means of heating it afforded by a tandoor, the air within was not far from the temperature of that without. Our furs were our only resort, and wrapped in them, we succeeded in retaining some portion of animal heat.

To-day being the Sabbath, we remained at Shaghád, and were pained to observe that a part of the people spent it in the labors of the loom, the employment in which the villagers pass away the winter months. In general the Armenians aim to observe the literal command to do no work on the Sabbath. Especially are the labors of the field almost universally suspended in obedience to it; though at Shoosha the villagers often take that opportunity to carry their wood to market. Shops in the bazár, too, are generally closed, though some do not scruple to sell goods privately. The feeling that the Lord's day is more sacred than their other festivals, is generally clear, and is expressed in a better observance of it. And conscience is often sufficiently enlightened to extort the confession, when reproved, that in profaning it they cannot but be guilty. Still, neither in their feelings nor in their conduct, can we find any just views of its sanctity. Travelling seems never to be regarded as an infringement of it; and that persons should be stopped by it when on a journey, appears to them exceedingly strange. They generally spend it as a holiday in visiting and feasting, and thus commit more sin than they would by laboring.

Attendance at church is perhaps more general than one would at first conclude from the small number present at any one time. That nothing like the whole population of a place attends at every service is perfectly evident. But it must be remembered, that, as there is public worship twice every day, one may go in the morning and another in the evening, and one who is absent to-day may be present to-morrow, and thus every one make out a tolerably frequent attendance even on common days. On the great festivals and Sabbath days, a much more full attendance is observable; and considering that there are then three services, of which some may be at one and some at another, we can believe, what we were assured in Kara-bagh, that nearly all attend church on the Lord's day. I must not forget, however, to except all marriageable and newly married females, whom custom debars entirely from the privileges of God's house! The term privileges, however, is improperly borrowed from more favored lands. The churches of Armenia afford no privileges, nor do the people have for them any of those feelings, which made the Psalmist esteem a day in the courts of the Lord better than a thousand. Conscience or custom, and not love, causes their attendance.

Nov. 8. Rising before the break of day, we hastened our departure for a warmer region. The atmosphere seemed colder than yesterday, but a smiling sun soon rose without a cloud. How cheering were his first rays, as chilled and benumbed we plodded over the bleak and snow covered mountains! Shaghád is near the river of Datev, (the ancient Orodnagerd,) here called the Bazár-chai, and we now recrossed it coming down from the south, where lay the lofty peak that rises back of Datev. The highest ridge we crossed was but little more elevated than Shaghád. In passing it, we entered the province of Nakhcheván, and then threaded in our descent, by the aid of a Russian

military road, a deep and rugged ravine, in which spring up the first waters of the river of Nakhcheván. In a warm nook at the bottom of the steepest descent, were the barracks of a permanent encampment of soldiers, whose commanding officer demanded a sight of our passports. Following the same road, which as well as the river continues to the town of Nakhcheván, we hastened on to Kara-baba, 6 fúrsakhs from Shaghád. The ravine here opened a little and presented a moderate extent of arable surface. The village was carefully surrounded with a mud wall, but its houses, which were also of mud, were in a ruinous state. The only spare rooms had been previously engaged for an officer who was expected in the evening, and we could find neither shelter for ourselves, nor food for our animals. At a late hour, therefore, we were obliged to push onward, not knowing but the open sky would be our only covering for the night. But an hour beyond, at a short distance from the road, we found the little moslem village of Selasíz.

Sela-síz may be resolved into an Arabic word with a Turkish termination, and made to signify *comfort-less*; and so the place actually proved to us. Although a whole family left its house to our disposal, it was but a single room so small as hardly to admit ourselves and our baggage. The dust of its mud walls and floor, mixed with ashes, cleaved to every thing that touched them; its broken door excluded little of the external air; and the whole village either could not or would not afford us the means for making a tandoor. And bread and cheese, and fried eggs, were the only articles of food to be found, after our long and hungry ride since daylight in the morning. But even such accommodations, given with a hospitable intent, would have been acceptable. Instead of this, however, our host in the morning, after we had paid well for every article of food, solicited a whole suit of clothes as a present for our lodg-

ings! We have now bid farewell to every shadow of hospitality, but shall hear more professions of it, than where it really in some degree existed.

In fact, you must from this point consider us as virtually in Persia. The two provinces of Nakhcheván and Eriván, now composing the province of Armenia, have too recently passed from the Persian to the Russian government, to have been materially modified by the change; and the descriptions of character and manners we hereafter give you, must be put to the amount of what we have to say of the Persian part of our tour. You will understand, of course, that these provinces, having been at the extremity of that empire, cannot be considered as in every respect fairly representing it. All I mean, is, that every thing here has a strong Persian tinge, differing very observably from whatever we had yet seen.

Nov. 9. Nakhcheván is but three fúrsakhs from Sela-síz. As we approached it, the plain opened and discovered to us several large villages. Cotton fields, too, of which we had seen the first at Kara-baba, now became frequent; but the plants were of a very stunted growth, being hardly more than a foot in height. Either from unsuitable food, or from exposure to the inclemency of the weather, my health was this morning extremely disordered, and I entered Nakhcheván tormented with excruciating pain. We sought for lodgings in the best of the two caravanserais the town contains. It consisted of a series of apartments inclosing an open quadrangle, with the stable in the centre so low that its terrace was nearly even with the ground. The best room was given us. It was about eight or ten feet square, with walls and floor of clay attaching a thick coat of dust to every thing that touched them, destitute of a fireplace, and with a door so loose that when it was shut, the cats and hens found no difficulty in visiting us.

In such lodgings, while the ground was white with snow, and it froze every night, my ague and fever took the occasion of the illness just alluded to, to renew its attacks. I did the best I could, with furs, coverlets and warm tea, and by the timely application of quinine obtained speedy relief.

LETTER XIV.

FROM NAKHCHEVAN TO ERIVAN AND ECHMIADZIN.

Description of Nakhcheván—Former Dominican mission—Ex-bishop of Aderbaiján—Leave Nakhcheván—Jews of Armenia—Accommodations at Khoik—A moslem family—Moslem devotions—Mount Ararat—Zivehdüdengeh—Valley of the Aras—Dawaly—Magoo—Kürds—Khor-viráb—Ardisher—Singular fasting—Reach Eriván—Inhospitable police regulation—Description of Eriván—Ride to Echmiádzin.

DEAR SIR,

NAKHCHEVAN claims the honor of being the oldest city in the world. Armenian etymology shows, that the name signifies *first place of descent*, or lodging;* and Armenian tradition affirms, that Noah first resided here after descending from mount Ararat. Such a tradition can of course rest upon no satisfactory authority; but that the whole is not of Christian origin, is proved by the fact that the name Naxuana is given to it by Ptolemy, and that Josephus, fifty years before him, affirms that the Armenians call the place where the ark rested, *the place of descent*.† From the first mention of it in Armenian tradition as the spot where the family of Ajtahág (Astyages) was located, it is often noticed both by native and foreign historians, as one of the most important cities in this part of Armenia. But so far back as the time of Chardin, it was a heap of ruins, and formed “in truth,” says he, “a pitiable object.” It is situated about two fúrsakhs from the Aras on the edge of a

* *Nakh* signifies first; and *cheván*, place of descent or lodging, corresponding exactly with *menzel* in Arabic.

† St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 267.

higher level than the alluvial plain immediately bordering upon that river. Around and in the city are numerous gardens, which even at this season gave evidence by the size of their trees and shrubbery of extreme luxuriance; and the abundance of quinces, pears, apples, melons, pomegranates, grapes, and almonds, which stocked the bazár, confirmed their character for fertility. The grapes especially were almost unequalled in excellence, and seemed to deserve the honor of growing on the spot, where "Noah began to be an husbandman, and planted a vineyard." The melons too were so plenty, that, together with bread, they seemed to form almost the sole food of the common people. But fruits, with all their charms, are here, as almost wherever they abound, both indicative and productive of disease, by the miasmata arising from the well-watered gardens which produce them, and the rapid diet to which they lead. Nakhcheván is as noted for its sickliness as for its fertility.

The city was ruined during the last war, and its inhabitants have not yet recovered energy to rebuild it. Wherever you turn, nothing but dilapidated walls meet your eye; and these being composed entirely of dried mud, of which almost every edifice is built, have a peculiarly "pitiable" aspect. The appearance of desolation is increased by the fact, that not a window is open to the street. Lest we were too unfavorably impressed, however, by this our first view of Persian mud walls, and as we saw no other style of building for several months, I reserve a more particular description for some future occasion. That the place was not very inviting to us, you may infer from our accommodations already alluded to. On returning from Eriván, we determined to obtain better rooms, and accepted the hospitality of a melik who had invited us to lodge with him. The apartment assigned us was a stable, filled with horses and grooms, and so dark that we could not possibly

see to read. At the first sight of it, though persuaded that he was far from intending an insult, we thanked him for his kindness, and withdrew. We then thought of applying to the police, but fearing no better success, as it appeared doubtful whether the town contained any good rooms, we returned to our old caravanserai.

Nakhcheván contains, besides perhaps 2000 moslem families, between eight and nine hundred families of Armenians, of which 100 or 120 are original inhabitants, and the remainder emigrants from Persia. It is the capital of a province of the same name whose governor is a moslem khan. We had a letter to him from the governor of the whole province of Armenia, on our return from Eriván, but he was not in town, and we failed of seeing him. The Russian major commandant, however, who formed one of the body of *responsible advisers* with which government has carefully surrounded him, treated us with attention at both visits. Respecting the province we obtained very little statistical information, except that before the war it contained not more than 300 families of Armenians. The number of that nation which subsequently emigrated from Persia, was stated to us by their bishop, from documents lying before him, at 9000 families. But how many of them settled in this vicinity we were not informed. We afterward found several villages of them in the province of Eriván.

The ancient and extensive Dominican mission, which once had its seat in this province, is now no more. It was commenced about A. D. 1320, by an Italian papal monk of the Dominican order. Such success attended it, that soon nearly 30 Armenian villages embraced the faith of Rome, and acknowledged subjection to a papal bishop, who, after being consecrated at Rome, resided in the village of Abarán (Abarner), with the title of archbishop of Nakhcheván. Many of the villages also contained convents,

governed by Armenian Dominicans. And "to form good subjects, youth of that nation were from time to time sent to Rome, to be educated in the sciences and in the spirit of the order of St. Dominic." With the exception of mass and the offices of the church, which are chanted in Armenian, the Roman ritual was strictly followed. The papal Tournefort extols their holy life, and assures us there were no better Christians in all the East. Already, however, in the days of Chardin, (A. D. 1673,) had twenty of these villages returned to the proper Armenian faith, and the inhabitants of the remaining eight were dropping off daily under intolerable exactions from Persian governors, caused by an attempt of a special mission from the pope to the Shah to withdraw them from their jurisdiction.* Abarner, Jahoog, and another village the name of which we neglected to note, held out until lately; but now empty churches are all that remain of their papacy. The bishop of Datev, within whose diocese they fall, assured us that their papal inhabitants had not returned to the Armenian church, but had emigrated. Some of these emigrants, or their descendants, now inhabit Smyrna.

The whole province of Nakhchevân belongs to the bishoprick of Datev or Süník; but we found here the emigrant bishop of Aderbaiján, and paid him a visit. His name was Pasegh. He formerly presided over all the Armenians of Aderbaiján, and part, at least, of the pashalik of Bayezed, and resided in the convent of Tateós Arakeál, (Thaddeus the apostle,) in the district of Magoo. His diocese was one of the largest, and his convent one of the oldest and most distinguished in Armenia, built, tradition asserts, on the spot where the apostle whose name it bears was martyred.† At the head of most of his flock, he retired

* Tournefort, vol. 2: p. 407. Chardin, vol. 2: p. 300. St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 145.

† St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 136.

within the Russian dominions at the close of the late war, and the movable property of his convent, which was formerly great in furniture and flocks, was transferred to Echmiádzin. He seemed less than forty years old, of a vigorous constitution well nurtured by good living, and of a naturally acute mind cheered by a fine flow of spirits. Possessed of a pleasing address, he received us in a friendly manner, and learning that we were of the clerical profession, inquired what rank we held in it, as if desirous to graduate his attentions accordingly. From a conversation thus introduced respecting our ecclesiastical polity, he passed to the doctrines of our religion, but seemed satisfied as soon as he learned that they resembled those of the Germans. He declared his pleasure, however, at being acquainted with the missionaries at Shoosha, and during the whole interview manifested quite a *gentlemanly* reluctance to express any opinions that might give occasion for argument; so much so, indeed, as to create in us a painful apprehension that it arose from the indifference of infidelity.

He soon inquired, as had almost every one with whom we had conversed since leaving Shoosha, the object of our present journey. We answered as usual, that it was to obtain information respecting Armenia and its inhabitants, of which, in our distant country, little was known. He seemed to feel himself called upon to apologize for the condition in which we found his countrymen, and said, we had come from an enlightened to an ignorant country, and possibly might often feel constrained to laugh at its inhabitants. We assured him that it was indeed true, that with us the people are generally more or less educated, while here we found them as universally ignorant; but instead of being an occasion for ridicule, this fact only gave us exceeding great pain. He attributed this ignorance to their having been until recently under the yoke of Mohammedan tyranny. But when we expressed to him the extreme

desirableness that they should avail themselves of their present favorable circumstances to become enlightened, he confessed that no attempt had yet been made, and that there was not a school in the whole province.

A paroxysm of my disease attacking me, cut short our visit; but Antonio remained awhile with the bishop, and directing the conversation to topics suggested by his own recent inclination to scriptural views, drew from him some concessions by which he was much astonished, and which confirmed our idea of the bishop's indifference to such things. On learning that we had the ultimate design of establishing schools for the Armenians, the bishop said it would be well, if we would not, like the Germans, preach against the mediation of the saints. But when pressed by the argument that Scripture ascribes only to God the prerogative of searching the heart, and that the saints cannot of course judge of the sincerity of our prayers, he confessed that Scripture mentions only the mediation of Christ, and that others have subsequently introduced that of the saints. In reference to the fasts, too, he allowed that Scripture teaches, that "not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man," and placed them upon the general ground of penance. Several other points were brought forward, and the bishop finally answered the whole by declaring, that the differences between all sects of Christians might be easily accommodated to the satisfaction of every one by a general council, but he knew not when it would be held. The same idea of a general council had been introduced in his conversation with us, while speaking of the several points of difference between the Armenian and Greek churches; and reminded us of the query, already suggested to us by others, whether an attempt will not be made to unite the Armenian with the Greek church, and of the possibility that his mind had been already directed to such a measure. Before we left town.

he politely sent us, of his own accord, a letter of introduction to the secretary of the Catholicos at Echmiádzin.

We left Nakhcheván at half past 7 A. M. on the 13th of November, for Eriván and Echmiádzin. During the morning, the alluvial of the Aras lay a little below us on the left; on the right was a range of hills, composed of variegated and unusual colors, and without a sign of vegetation; while our road passed over an undulating and uncultivated surface. Among the hills not far from us was a salt mine, which we intended to visit on our return; but were dissuaded in expectation of being able to examine a more remarkable one near Khoy. Two others are worked in the same range of mountains, one a little to the northeast of Nakhcheván, and the other to the west of Eriván. In many other parts, also, along the valley of the Aras and in Aderbaiján, we were assured, mineral salt can be found by digging only a few feet beneath the surface. Large slabs of it, resembling grey marble so much that we at first mistook them for building stones, met our eye, in piles or transported in carts or on animals, in almost every place from Kars to Tebriz. No other salt is used in these parts, and so pure is it, that it is believed to be universally only pulverized, to fit it for the table. All the water on the road, this morning, brought down so many mineral ingredients from the adjacent hills, as to be unpalatable.

Among the two or three who joined our little caravan at Nakhcheván, was a Jewish merchant of Akhaltsikhe, whose national timidity induced him, for the sake of company, thus to break, as he supposed, the fourth commandment, by travelling on Saturday. He was uttering lamentations all the way, and every little accident that befell himself or his horse, was interpreted as an expression of the displeasure of God at his sin. But he only got from our moslem muleteers the taunting consolation, that, as we were to rest to-morrow, he would make up for breaking his own, by keeping the Christian Sabbath.

The Jews were once numerous in the valley of the Aras and in the adjacent parts of Armenia. Without reckoning Shampád, the ancestor of the Pakradians, and his compatriots, whose descendants had probably lost their distinctive Jewish character long before they were converted to Christianity in company with the Armenian nation; we are told that Dikrán, on taking possession of the throne of the Seleucidæ, invaded Palestine, 83 A. C. and carrying thence a company of Jewish captives, settled them in Vartkés, now Vagharshabád;* and that Pazaprán, when in connection with his Persian auxiliaries he had taken Jerusalem, transported Hircanus, the high priest whom he deposed, with a company of his countrymen, to the city of Shamiramagérd, now Van.† Whatever credit may be due to these traditions, more authentic history informs us, that in the fourth century, besides the colony in Vagharshabád and a large number in Nakhcheván, the Jews amounted in Ardashád to 9000, in Zarehaván (now Diadeen) to 8000, and in Van to at least 18000 families.‡ But they suffered even more severely than the Armenians, from the persecutions of the fire-worshippers; and under Shahpoor Second, toward the close of the same century, were all either destroyed or transported to Persia. §

Now, there is not a Jew in the whole valley of the Aras; nor, except the colony in Akhaltsikhe and Colchis, to which our companion this morning belonged, another in Daghistán and its vicinity, and a third in Salmás and Oormih, did we hear of any within the field of our inquiry in this region. The first have been already mentioned, and the last will come under review hereafter. Of the others we

* Chamcheán, P. 3: c. 3. Mos. Choren. Lib. 2: c. 15.

† Chamcheán, P. 3: c. 4. St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 139. Mos. Choren. Lib. 2: c. 18.

‡ St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 115, 118, 125, 132, 139.

§ Ibid. Chamcheán, P. 3: c. 21.

can give you little more than statistical information. They seem to have been once more numerous than they now are, as among the moslem villages in the province of Derbénd, many are said to have been once Jews. At present, the large market town of Vertashin not far from Nookha, contains about 100 families. Near Shámakhy is another market town entirely inhabited by them, to the number of two or three hundred families. In the bazárs of Bakoo may be found a number, but they are only transient merchants. In the suburbs of Kooba is a large village, of at least 400 families, having seven synagogues. In Derbénd they reckon 100 families, and have a caravanserai to which Jews alone resort, indicating a large population in that region. Accordingly, as you advance northward, they are said to be numerous, both in the mountains and in the province of Northern Daghistán, till you reach the large town of Andrevá which is entirely inhabited by them. They are all natives of the country, born of ancestors who have lived in it for ages, and speaking its language or languages. Except a few in Derdénd who are engaged in trade, they are cultivators of the soil. Since coming under the Russian government, their former oppressions have entirely ceased, and their worldly circumstances now differ little from those of their moslem neighbors. In religion, they are believed to be adherents of the Talmud.

In his missionary tours among the moslems of Daghistán, Mr. Zarembo, of the Shoosha mission, once visited two of the synagogues of the Jews in the village near Kooba, on the day of their Sabbath. In one of them the exercises were opened by an address from a learned Rabbí of Jerusalem in Rabbinic Hebrew, which was interpreted into their language. They were little interested, and after awhile began to disperse. Mr. Zarembo said to them, 'Why do you leave? Ought you not to remain and attend the regular prayers?' They seemed to understand that

he wished to address them, and called out to him to speak, if he had any thing to communicate. He began by expressing to them his attachment, and that of all Christians, to the Old Testament which they received, as well as his high veneration for Abraham and the other Patriarchs, their ancestors; and then out of those same Scriptures, he preached unto them Jesus. They listened with attention and interest, and at the close invited him to their houses to hear from him farther concerning the faith in Christ. In other places, also, Mr. Zaremba has had interviews both with Rabbies and the common people, and has found the latter especially disposed to hear him favorably.

After a ride of four fursakhs, we reached Khoik, the first village on our road, at half past 1 P. M. Its high walls flanked with towers made us, at first sight, hope to find in it the accommodations of a large village for the Sabbath. But a nearer approach showed that its walls were mere ruins, and on entering it we found only about twenty squalid mud cabins, all inhabited by moslems. We had bid farewell to under-ground houses on entering the valley of the Aras, but the custom of lodging in stables still prevailed. And on stopping at the door of the head man, we were directed to one of them for our accommodations. Antonio being sent to reconnoitre, pronounced the *otákh*, or part appropriated to travellers, uninhabitable, and we petitioned for a room in the house. The owner, having received a hint from our muleteers that we were English, and not the people to make a noise about a copper, sent word from a distance that one was at our service; but his women met us at the door, and refused admittance. The old man soon appeared, and, with a stentorian voice unequalled for harshness, clearing the way, seized my horse's bridle, and cried, in the same tone that had extorted obedience from his harem, *düşh*, (dismount, literally *fall*,) asking if we

thought he would let strangers go away from his door in want of a night's lodging !

The house, apparently the best in the village, was built throughout, floor, walls and terrace, of mud. Fortunately, as its owner had two wives, it had two rooms. The one assigned us, being the principal family apartment, was of course filled with every species of dirt, vermin and litter ; and withal, as they were in the midst of the process of baking, the insufferable smoke of the dried cow-dung which heated their *tannoor*, or cylindrical oven, detained us a long time before we could take possession. Persuaded at last by impatience that the bread must be done, I entered, and found our host and chief muleteer shaking their shirts in the oven, to dislodge the "crawling creatures" that inhabited them. Though new to us then, we afterward found reason to believe that this use of the *tannoor* is common, and for it alone we have known it to be heated. In such ovens was our bread baked, by being stuck upon their sides, and though we would fain have quieted our fastidiousness by imagining that they were purified by fire, the nature of the fuel of which that was almost invariably made, left little room upon which to found such a conception. And as for the loathsome company of which our host and muleteer had thus attempted to rid themselves, we found them too constantly affecting our senses to think of imagining them away ; for the traveller can hardly journey a day here, or in any part of Turkey, without their annoying him, and his only relief is in a constant change of his linen. The apartment was finally cleared and swept, but the old man could give us neither carpet nor mat, and our own painted canvass and travelling carpets were all that covered the ground on which we sat and slept.

The surrender of the best half of the house to a company of strangers, caused much derangement in the concerns of the family ; and, crowded as the husband, his pair of wives,

and a multitude of children were, into so close contact, some collision, of feeling at least, could not fail to result. The tones of the old man's voice, however, which often thundered upon us from their apartment, possessed, perhaps from frequent use for such purposes, a harshness admirably adapted to drown all domestic quarrels, and as they died away, were generally followed by the most perfect quiet. I ought to say, however, to the credit of his wives, that notwithstanding their unwelcome reception of us at first, they treated us, when once admitted to the family, with all motherly kindness; nor did they hesitate to appear in our room unveiled, and converse with us. In fact, little of moslem etiquette appeared in the regulations of the house, for the Christians, and even the Jew of our caravan, found ready admittance into any part of it. On our return, the youngest child, taking fright at Mr. Dwight's spectacles, set to crying so obstinately as to alarm the superstitious fears of the old ladies, lest bad consequences should result, probably from the evil eye, and they earnestly begged him to read a prayer over it from the Gospel to break the charm! Whether the Armenian priests say prayers for children in such circumstances, I am unable to say; but this request seems to have referred to such a practice. I have seen it done in the Greek church.

The village is without a mosk, but has one mollah who teaches two or three children, and another who for acting as tax-gatherer was execrated in no measured terms by our host. It is the property of Hassan Khan, the governor of the province, whose father, we were assured, some thirty years ago, seized upon it, and by an arbitrary act converted its inhabitants, who had formerly been freeholders, into tenants. They pay, according to the information of our host, 35 per cent. of their produce to the proprietor, and a capitation tax of a ducat (about \$2.25) to the emperor. None of the inhabitants of the neighboring villages are now freeholders.

Nov. 14. At the first dawn of the Sabbath, we were awaked by the devotions of our host. Having performed the prescribed lustrations, he began at that hour to supplicate his God, in the same inharmonious tones with which he ruled his family. Their harshness indeed was not a little aggravated, by a very distinct enunciation of the guttural sounds of the Arabic, the language of his devotions. His petitions were repeatedly interrupted by a reproof to his family, a direction to some child to drive his cattle down to the Aras to pasture, or some other order for the business of the day. The burden of them, of which however he understood nothing, was the mercy of God—that he neither begets nor is begotten—praises to him—and remembrances of Mohammed and his family. Having extremely few words at command, his repetitions were more frequent than is usual with his brethren, and finally, working himself into an ecstasy, he repeated *ya Allah!* (Oh God!) twenty or thirty times successively, as fast as his tongue could articulate.

Our muleteer, having been brought up at the feet of some strict mollah, and obtained the title of *Meshedy* by making a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Imám Riza at Meshed, was more accomplished and very regular in his devotions. He talked much about them, and often when urged to do any thing would say, let me pray and then it shall be attended to. They were frequently performed in our presence, and on one occasion we were forced to take some notice of them. At Selasíz, crowded as we were, he found a spot to spread his carpet and say his prayers in the midst of us, and did it probably with more formality, as an expression of his feelings at finding himself again in moslem society, after having been so long among Christians. A comb, which he always carried in a leathern bag suspended to his girdle, was placed on the extremity of his carpet before him, his beard smoothed down, and his limbs nicely adjust-

ed, as a preparation. His prayer was uttered, sometimes audibly, and sometimes by merely moving his lips; and the evolutions of his body, always apparently the most essential part of a moslem's devotions, were performed standing, kneeling, and prostrate. One ceremony was added, which I do not remember to have seen performed by the sūnnies; it was the combing of his beard, as an integral part of his devotions. He occasionally stopped to take a part in the conversation of the company, and at the end his friends passed many encomiums upon his performance.

How directly opposed is such worship to the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount! What heathen ever used more vain repetitions than these moslems? Surely no Jewish hypocrites were ever more public in their individual devotions. Not only do they pray standing in the bazárs and in the corners of the streets, but at Tebriz, in the open space "at the entering in of the gates of the city," is a square platform erected for the special purpose of prayer. Subsequent observations and inquiries confirmed our first impressions, that the lower class of Persians are even more regular in the forms of worship than the Osmanlies, and that they are very sincere in their religion. Yet in their prayers, how can they be sincere? for they know not their meaning. It is a singular feature of the whole region of Armenia, that every sect and nation inhabiting it, Armenians, Georgians, Nestorians, Turks, Persians, and Kúrds, address God in an unknown tongue!

Sick at heart of these abominations of the false prophet, and wishing to retreat from our dirty den for meditation becoming this holy day, we walked into the fields to gaze upon Mount Ararat, and reflect upon the time when Noah in this very valley builded an altar unto the Lord, and offered that acceptable sacrifice of a sweet savor, which procured for himself and his posterity a divine title to the earth and its productions, and the solemn covenant that "while

the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." We first saw that mountain the morning we entered Nakhchevan, and during the three weeks we were in the valley of the Aras, nothing but cloudy weather during a few days obscured it from our sight. It was nearer at any point between here and Erivân, but perhaps nowhere did we have a better view of it than from this place. The natives know it under no other name than *Mâsis* in Armenian, and *Aghur-dagh* (heavy mountain) in Turkish. The name of *Ararat*, by which it is called among Europeans, is applied in Scripture only to a *country*, which is in one instance called a kingdom.* The similar name of *Ararâd* was given by the Armenians, long before they had received the Scripture account of the flood by their conversion to Christianity, to the central, largest and most fertile province of their country, the one which, with the doubtful exception of some 230 years, was the residence of their kings or governors from the commencement to the termination of their political existence, and nearly in the centre of which this mountain stands. The singular coincidence, considering the ease with which so distinguished a province might be named by foreigners for the kingdom itself, argues much for the identity of the Ararat of Scripture with the Ararâd of Armenia.† It was on the mountains of Ararat that the ark rested after the flood; and certainly not among the mountains of Ararâd, or of Armenia generally, or of any part of the world, have I seen one, the

* Gen. 8: 4. 2 Kings, 19: 37. Is. 37: 38. Jer. 51: 27.

† The name of Armenia does not occur in the original of the old Testament, unless we consider *Minni*, in Jerem. 51: 27, as an abridgement of it, Saint-Martin, however, ingeniously suggests that *Minni* may refer to the Manavazians a distinguished Armenian clan descended from Manavaz, a son of Haig; the capital of whose country was Manavazagêrd, now Melazgêrd, St.Mart. vol. 1: p. 249.

majesty of whose appearance could plead half so powerfully as this, a claim to the honor of having once been the stepping stone between the old world and the new. It lies N. 57° W. of Nakhcheván, and S. 25° W. of Eriván, on the opposite side of the Aras; and from almost every point between the two places, the traveller has only to look across the valley, to take into one distinct field of vision, without a single intervening obstacle, the mighty mass from its base to its summit. At Eriván it presents two peaks, one much lower than the other, and appears to be connected with a range of mountains extending toward the northwest, which, though really elevated, are in comparison so low, as only to give distinctness to the impression of its lonely majesty. From Nakhcheván, not far from a hundred miles distant, and also from our present point of observation, it appears like an immense isolated cone of extreme regularity, rising out of the low valley of the Aras; and the absence of all intervening objects to show its distance or its size, leaves the spectator at liberty to indulge the most sublime conceptions his imagination may form of its vastness. At all seasons of the year, it is covered far below its summit with snow and ice, which occasionally form avalanches, that are precipitated down its sides with the sound of an earthquake, and, with the steepness of its declivities, have allowed none of the posterity of Noah to ascend it.* It was now white to its very base with the same hoary covering; and in gazing upon it, we gave ourselves up to the

* Report does indeed say that a traveller has recently ascended it. But the vartabéds at Echmiádzin strenuously and circumstantially denied it as a willful fabrication. Lest they might be biased by their superstitions, we inquired of the governor of the province. He said that a German had passed through the country a year before, and published, on his return to Europe, that he had ascended to the top, and planted a cross upon it; but that it is denied by the natives, and many even of the Russians here do not believe it. The season of the year alone seems to furnish a sufficient denial. He was here in the month of November.

impression that on its top were once congregated the only inhabitants of the earth, and that, while travelling in the valley beneath, we were paying a visit to the second cradle of the human race.

Two objections are made to the supposition that Scripture refers to this mountain when it speaks of "the mountains of Ararat." One is, that there are now no olive trees in its vicinity, from which Noah's dove could have plucked her leaf. And it is true, so far as we could learn, that that tree exists neither in the valley of the Koor nor of the Aras, nor on the coast of the Caspian, nor any where nearer than Batoom and other parts of the eastern coast of the Black sea, a distance of seven days journey of a caravan, or about 130 miles in the circuitous route that would thus be taken. But might not a dove make this journey in a day? Or might not the climate then have been warmer than it is now? The second objection is drawn from the fact that some of the old versions and paraphrases, particularly the Chaldee and the Syriac, refer "the mountains of Ararat" to the mountains of Kûrdistân, where there is, not far from Jezeereh, a high mountain called Joody, on which the moslems suppose the ark to have rested.* But if the ark rested on that, the posterity of Noah would, most likely, have descended at once into Mesopotamia, and have reached Shinar from the north; while, from the valley of the Aras, they would naturally have kept along on the eastern side of the mountains of Media, until they reached the neighborhood of Hamadán or Kermansháh, which is nearly east of Babylon.† Such is the route now taken every day by all the caravans from this region to Bagdád. The Armenians believe, not only that this is the mountain on which the ark rested after the flood, but that the ark still exists upon its top; though, rather from supernatural than from physical obstacles, no one has

* St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 260.

† See. Gen. 11: 2.

yet been able to visit it. A devout vartabéd, their legends relate, once attempted, for this purpose, to ascend the mountain. While yet far from the top, drowsiness came upon him, and he awoke at the bottom, in the very spot whence he had started. Another attempt resulted only in the same miraculous failure. He then betook himself more fervently to prayer, and started the third time. Again he slept, and awoke at the bottom; but now an angel stood before him with a fragment of the ark, as a token that his pious purpose was approved and his prayer answered, though he could never be allowed to reach the summit of the mountain. The precious gift was thankfully received, and is to this day carefully preserved, as a sacred relic, in the convent of Echmiádzin.

Nov. 15. We started at sunrise; and as we hastened over the same undulating and gravelly tract, in a sharp frosty atmosphere, a sleeping fog gave the alluvial of the Aras below us the appearance of an extensive lake. It gradually broke up and vanished, and left in its place a more cheering scene of numerous villages and extensive cultivation. With the exception of one small hamlet, however, and a few fields of grain and cotton around it, we passed no houses or cultivation before reaching the Arpa-chai, at 12 o'clock. Three quarters of an hour beyond, we stopped at the large village of Ziveh-düdengeh, 4 fúr-sakhs from Khoik.

In the Turkish nomenclature of rivers, *Arpa-chai* (barley river), and *Kara-soo* (black water), repeatedly occur, and indicate that the streams which bear the one or the other name respectively, are usefully appropriated to purposes of irrigation, or pass on in their beds without contributing to fertilize the adjacent soil. The beautifully limpid water of this river, being scattered widely in artificial canals, gives extreme fertility to a broad tract, as it flows down to the Aras. It forms the present boundary between the

provinces of Nakhcheván and Eriván, and in the ancient divisions of Armenia, was the eastern limit of the province of Ararád.* The district which it waters is still called by its ancient name, Sharoor, though it is sometimes corrupted into Sheril. Besides its extreme fertility, it is well peopled, and presents an animated scene of about forty villages, some of which seem to be large.

The crops which we saw were rice and cotton. Rice was the most extensively cultivated. From the abundance of water furnished by the river, it produces a large stalk, heavy ear, and full bright kernel, and yields from five to twenty fold. It was now harvested, and in an open space in front of the house where we stopped, the villagers were slowly treading it out, like wheat, by driving around upon it four or five cattle abreast. In wandering about the village on our return, we found a mill for cleaning it. A machine resembling a corn-mill, except that a block or plank of wood supplied the place of the nether stone, first loosened a part of the husk. The process of winnowing separated that; and the remainder was removed by its being placed in piles upon the ground, and beaten by a large pointed instrument resembling the hammer of a forge. The whole, except the winnowing, was done by water, and the rice came out perfectly clean, and but little broken. The cotton here was nearly twice as large as that which we had observed on approaching Nakhcheván; but yet would not compare at all, in the height of the stalk, the size of the boll, or the length of the fibre, with the upland growth of our southern States. The peasants were now picking it for the last time. In every cotton field was another article of produce, which I must not omit to notice. After having been reduced to the necessity of burning butter for lights at Shaghád on the mountains, we were much surprised to find our lamps at Selasíz, the first village in the valley, supplied with oil. It proved to be castor-oil.

* St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 108.

And we afterward found, that, wherever cotton is raised, whether in this valley or in Aderbaiján, the *palma Christi*, or castor-oil plant, is sowed with it, and its oil used for lamps. Where the soil or climate does not allow of these productions, tallow placed in an open lamp supplies, in villages, the place of oil. In cities, it is made into regular candles.

The valley of the Aras is much narrower than that of the Koor. Of its comparative fertility we had little opportunity to judge, as our path rarely led us down to the alluvial which borders on the river. What we saw of it, however, and the extreme productiveness of the tracts watered by the two or three tributary streams that crossed our path, led us to think its fertility could hardly be exceeded. Yet in no case was any thing produced without constant irrigation, caused by conducting water, sometimes to a great distance, in artificial canals. Wherever a canal could not be made to reach, not only was no crop cultivated, but even grass seemed hardly to grow, and unsightly saline weeds covered with thorns, only added to the aspect of barrenness. If it be true, as some have imagined, that we are to look here for the site of Eden; surely in no part of the earth is the primeval curse more palpably inflicted, than in the original paradise of Adam. Nowhere is it more true that man 'eats bread in the sweat of his face,' and nowhere are 'thorns and thistles' more spontaneously produced. The mountains around, instead of being covered with trees as in the Kara-bagh, or clothed with verdant pastures as at Erzroom, present nothing but forbidding precipices of rock or of earth, apparently without even a spire of grass. Their variegated colors, however, from white to fiery red, embracing in fact almost every shade of the rainbow, indicate that though so miserably poor in the vegetable, they may be rich in the mineral kingdom. The whole scene of valley and mountain presents not a tree, except

in the immediate vicinity of the villages. Their mud houses are frequently half concealed in the foliage of fruit trees. Another of their features, also, not less unseemly than this was ornamental, deserves to be noticed. The cow-dung, which had been prepared for fuel during the warm months, was now piled in conical stacks at every door, and formed, by their height and number, wherever we went, a more prominent object than the houses themselves.

The compound name of Ziveh-düdengeh indicates, what we learned to be a fact, that it is composed of two villages. It contains in all about 100 houses, inhabited entirely, like almost if not quite every village in Sharoor, by moslems, and has one mosk and three or four mollahs, one of whom teaches ten or a dozen children. The other villages in the district, are similarly furnished with the means of education; but they have no central school of a higher order.

Nov. 16. We arose at the earliest dawn, and started at half past 6 A. M. The summit of Ararat was whitened with the broad light of day, while the obscurity of night still darkened its base; the first rays of the sun soon crowned it with gold; then gradually descending, spread over it to its base a robe of similar brilliancy; and finally shooting across the plain, cheered us with their warmth. The tract fertilized by the Arpa-chai, is bounded in this direction, by a range of rocky hills that shoot out from the mountains nearly to the banks of the Aras. We found a level pass through them at 9 o'clock, and entered upon a tract beyond as barren as that we had left was fertile. With the exception of a small space, watered by a rivulet coming down from a valley at the foot of the mountain on the right, and ploughed for a scanty crop of grain, we observed no cultivation the whole day. Not a small portion of the plain was incrustated and whitened by a layer of nitre. A ride of 6 fursakhs brought us to the Armenian village of Dawaly at half past 2 P. M.

Our Mohammedan muleteers first inquired in vain for lodgings, in Turkish. The question was then put by one of our attendants, in Armenian, and a little boy, starting up with an animated countenance, exclaimed, 'Are you Armenians? Follow me, and I'll see if father can't give you a room.' We were soon furnished with unusually good stable accommodations. Our little friend, and a brother or two of nearly the same size, listened with much eagerness to our conversation in the course of the evening respecting education, and at the end preferred an earnest request, that we would come and establish a school for them, complaining sadly that their priests took no pains with them. They were the only Armenians in the country, young or old, so far as I recollect, that exhibited to us any desire for education. We were much amused, on our return from Eriván, by their bringing a serious charge against Antonio of not being a Christian, because he had been so heterodox as to kill a fowl with its head to the west. The Armenian practice in these parts, it appeared, is to turn the head of whatever animal they slay toward the east, and make over it the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity. Their church, like the Greek, holding the apostolical command to abstain 'from things strangled and from blood,' to be still binding, most strictly orders that the jugular vein of all animals intended for food shall be cut. Consequently a strangled fowl is held in utter abomination, nor will they eat even any kind of game that is shot, unless its throat is cut before it expires. Mohammedans, too, not less carefully abstain from whatever has died in its blood; and also make a religious ceremony of the simple business of killing a fowl, by cutting off its head "in the name of God most merciful."

Dawaly contains about 100 families, all of whom emigrated from Magoo at the close of the last war. Their houses and manner of life indicated flourishing circumstan-

ces, and large quantities of excellent wheat, which they were now winnowing upon their threshing floors around the village, proved the productiveness of their lands. It is the only crop they cultivate. Their soil belongs to the crown, but no taxes are yet demanded. They have one mud-walled church, with three priests, but no school. Very few are able to read, and not more than two or three can write. Magoo, from whence they came, is a district of the Persian province of Aderbaiján, on the southern side of the Aras nearly opposite Dawaly, having for its capital a town of the same name. It corresponds with the Armenian canton of Shavarshán or Ardoz, in which is the convent of Tateós Arakeál. Our host estimated the number who emigrated from it at 1000 families, including all the Armenian inhabitants of the villages. In the town, also, not more than 50 Armenian families remain; the rest of its present population consists of about 150 moslem families, of whom nearly all are Kürds. The Armenians had not a school in the whole district.

Among the people at Dawaly, numbers wore the Osmanly dress of turban and shalwár. We found that they were Kürds. I have already alluded to that people, as forming a part of the population of Kara-bagh. They inhabit two mountainous districts, one of which separates that province from Eriván, and is not far from this village; and the other lies in the same range of mountains to the south of where we crossed them, on our way from Shoosha to Nakhcheván. The number in the former district was stated to us at 1500, and in the latter at 1700 families; but the estimate is probably too large. Many Armenian villages are scattered among them. They live a nomadic life, and in the winter migrate to the warm valley of the Aras, much as their pastoral neighbors of the Turkish language do to that of the Koor, and spend the cold months in tents, or in apartments furnished them by the villagers. Many were lodged in this vil-

age, and one or two families occupied another part of the same suite of stables in which we were accommodated. Like their countrymen every where, they are robbers by nature, but the Russian police makes them harmless citizens. They are ignorant in the extreme, and their attachment to the moslem faith is more bigoted than that of their neighbors. The missionaries at Shoosha once, in a visit to two or three of their villages, found them so easily exasperated by a few words against Mohammed, as to have been ready, but for fear of the Russians, to proceed to open violence.

Nov. 17. Our day's ride to Ardisher was 4 fúrsakhs, across a plain as little cultivated, and almost as barren as that of yesterday. From it, at some distance to the left, appeared the convent of Khor-viráb, on a rocky eminence rising out of the alluvial of the river. It derives its name, which signifies *a deep pit*, from the celebrated cave within its precincts, in which, according to the legendary history of Armenia, St. Gregory Loosavorích was confined by king Durtiád for fourteen years, in the midst of serpents, and in the endurance of multiplied torments;* and from which the conversion of the king and the whole nation to Christianity, by means of his sanctity and miraculous powers, alone released him. The Armenians regard it with the most superstitious veneration, and it is hardly less an object of pilgrimage than Echmiádzin. In explaining its sanctity to Antonio, some Armenian fellow-travellers this morning advanced sentiments respecting the character of St. Gregory, which, being opposed by him, led to a storm of words that attracted our attention. One from Bayezeed asserted that he was a prophet; another from Maragha, that he was next to God; and a third from Kara-bagh, that he was actually divine! Antonio laughed at their ignorance, and said that for aught he knew he might be a saint, but he was no more than a man, and much like the English

* St. Mart. vol. 2: p. 419.

and German missionaries, who in our days go to preach the gospel to the heathen. Provoked at his low ideas of their great saint, and taking into consideration that he rejected fasting, by the effects of which they were probably themselves a little soured to-day, it being Wednesday, they agreed to stigmatize him with the epithet of heretic. You may suppose that they were unusually bigoted and ignorant, and perhaps they were, but we had already heard, at Shoosha, of a similar expression respecting the divine character of St. Gregory, and even Nerses Shnorháli seems to have attributed to him the most full prophetic rank. "Is a rite," he asks, "appointed by St. Gregory, at all inferior to those which owe their origin to the holy apostles?—[by him] who, in respect to insufferable torments endured for the name of Christ, heavenly power received from him, and the conversion of such a multitude to his worship, was not at all behind them'!*

We visited Khor-viráb on our return from Eriván. It is about two hours from Ardisher. No bishop resides in it; and of the three vartabéds who do, only one was on the ground. The church is the principal building, and, though smaller, is in the same style and taste as that of Datev. Being built of fine rose-colored freestone, regularly hewn within and without, it was neat as well as solid. The old vartabéd affirmed that it was built in the life time of St. Gregory, by his grandsons. We were not slow to inquire for the sacred pit. A little chapel has been erected over it in a corner of the quadrangular court-yard of the convent. Taking each a lighted taper from the altar, we entered a small door beneath it, and descending a perpendicular shaft, reached the bottom of the pit by a ladder perhaps 30 feet long. It is circular, 15 or 20 feet in diameter, walled up artificially with stone, and covered with a dome. Antonio was disappointed to find the horrible pit

* Unthanragán, p. 245.

look so comfortable, and, accustomed at the distance of Smyrna to hear that the saint was fed by angels in his confinement, was not a little surprised to be directed by our guide to a small crevice in the dome, through which his daily loaf of bread was conveyed to him by a charitable old woman.

The position of Khor-viráb helps materially to fix the site of the ancient Ardashád (Artaxata), the city which boasted of Hannibal for its founder, and is so often mentioned by Greek and Roman writers as the capital of Armenia, during the first centuries of the Christian era. For, whether the legend that gave birth to the convent be true or false, it had undoubtedly gained currency while the location of Ardashád was yet well known; and that the Khor-viráb was in the citadel of that city, is an essential part of the story.* Nor does the location disagree with that which is assigned by Armenian writers to Ardashád; which was at the junction of the Medzamor with the Aras.† The Medzamor was undoubtedly the river that now flows by Ardisher, as there is no other of any kind between the valley of the Zengy and Sharoor.‡ It enters the Aras but a little above Khor-viráb; and the Aras flows along in plain sight, about half a mile distant. The rocky eminence, too, on which the convent stands, is the only spot adapted for a citadel, and the low soil around, being extremely moist and in many places marshy, must render the spot, as was Ardashád, very unhealthy.§ We observed, however, no signs of former fortifications or edifices, and the vartabéd, (who said that his convent stood within the precincts of that city,) confessed that no ruins of it are now to be found.—We had from Khor-viráb, our

* Chamcheán, P. 3: c. 15.

† Chamcheán, P. 2: c. 2. St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 117.

‡ St. Mart. vol. 1; p. 40.

§ See Mos. Choren. Lib. 2: c. 46.

nearest view of mount Ararat. The limit of the Russian territory here is not the river, but the mountain. So that in Ararat centre the boundaries of the three empires of Russia, Turkey, and Persia.

Ardisher is inhabited by another colony of emigrants from the Persian territory. They came from the district of Salmás, and form a village of 91 houses, the newness of which is indicated by the entire absence of trees. It had no school. We were the guests of a melik, who seemed to be the head of the village, though not the proprietor of the soil, for that belonged to the crown. The title borne by him is often given by the Shah to Armenians in his realm, and though frequently hereditary, does not indicate any antiquity of family, much less a descent from the ancient nobility of the nation. It is itself perhaps no older than the time of Shah Abbas, who gave it to the Armenian magistrates, appointed to preside over the colonists whom he carried to Isfahán.*

Within a few rods of Ardisher are the ruins of an ancient city, to the examination of which we devoted a part of our afternoon. Its citadel resembles an artificial hill surrounded by a wall and a ditch. The city itself had double walls, which are now nothing but large mounds of earth, inclosing an extensive tract with one or two small villages. In no part did we discover any traces of stone-work, and the whole seems to have been built, in the modern style of the country, of mud. The name of the modern village might naturally be expected to afford a clue to that of the ancient city; but the only trace I find of such a name in these parts is, that Ardashád was called in later times Ardashár.† The location forbids us to suppose that city to have been here. We were inclined to think that they are the ruins of *Tovin*, a city which, from its foundation in A. D. 350 to A. D. 859, was the capital of the country, and the name of which fre-

* Chamcheán, P. 7: c. 9.

† St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 119.

quently occurs in history, especially during the reign of the Persian and Arabian governors. It was situated to the north of Ardashád, in a more healthy spot, on the river Azad or Medzamor, and its name signified a hill.* A river, which must be the same, now comes down from the mountains here, and fertilizes a broad tract ; and though it is so distributed into small canals for purposes of irrigation, that the main bed cannot be distinguished, one of the branches passes directly by the ruined walls.

Nov. 18. Our lodgings the last night, though not entirely separated from the stable, were sufficiently elevated to be but little affected by it ; decent Persian felts covered the floor ; and all looked so comfortable, that we began, on entering them, even to meditate upon the advantages of a stable, as a lodging place for travellers. But as evening came on, several other parties were introduced into the same room, and quite filled it. The greatest disadvantage, perhaps, of a crowded sleeping room is, that its inmates can never agree to cease talking, and go to sleep, at the same time. Our companions to-night, however, were so uncommonly taciturn over their fasting supper of dry bread and raw onions, that we still lay down with the hope of undisturbed repose. But midnight was hardly passed, when the scene entirely changed, and animated conversation interrupted our slumbers. A table, loaded with joints of meat and other substantial provisions, which each had brought in his saddle-bags from home, was spread upon the centre of the floor ; and the canonical hours of the fast being now over, nearly the whole company were indulging heartily in its good cheer, little caring that they kept us heretics awake till near morning. One of our fellow-travellers, who had been the most forward, in the early part of the day, to charge Antonio with heresy for not fasting, ate with apparently the best relish, and talked the loudest. Such

* St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 119.

facts tended to show us, what we were assured by different individuals is true, that the fasts are universally considered a burden, and kept, not from the heart and in a spiritual manner, but because they are commanded; that the mere external act is generally regarded as in some way meritorious to cancel sin; and that they decidedly contribute to promote a self-righteous and censorious spirit.

We started at half past 7 A. M. In crossing the tract irrigated by the river already mentioned, a new species of plough attracted our notice. The end of its beam rested upon an axle supported by two wheels, one of which, being designed to run in the furrow, was so much larger than the other as to preserve the horizontal level. A boy rode upon each yoke, and cheered himself or the cattle by a song. Uncultivated and barren hills separate this district from the valley of Eriván. In crossing them we met numerous caravans of cattle. Though the sight had now become familiar, I have hardly yet mentioned it. Throughout the valleys of the Koor and the Aras, and in Aderbajján, the ox is universally used as a beast of burden. A pack-saddle is fitted to his back, and he is driven in caravans like the horse, with almost as heavy a burden. Nothing is more common than to see a man riding upon an ox.

We entered Eriván a little after midday, and drove to the Georgian caravanserai, with the hope that, being the largest in the city, it might afford us tolerable lodgings. To our surprise, not a key could be turned for us, without orders from the police. Having a letter for the governor of the province of Armenia, from the governor of the Mussulman Provinces whom we had met at Shoosha, we sent it immediately, with our passports and a petition that we might have where to lay our heads. But the governor was absent, and the police office was closed for the Russian siesta, which, in these provinces, suspends all intercourse with official characters, from 12 to about 4 o'clock

every day. There was no remedy, and throwing our baggage upon the ground in the open court, we summoned all the patience at our command, to wait till we could be attended to. Near sunset, a little room was finally opened. It was a complete prisoner's cell, with naked stone walls covered by a solid arch, and a floor of earth having so many hillocks and stones in its surface, that with only bare carpets for beds, we found much difficulty in adjusting our bones to its inequalities.—As we left for Echmi-âdzin the morning after our arrival, and on our return had our observations limited by my ague and fever, you must expect but a poor account of the place.

Eriván seems to have been first fortified and raised into importance, in the earlier reigns of the Sofian dynasty; and, though occasionally taken by the Osmanlies, it has from that period been considered the chief place in the Persian division of Armenia. Under the present dynasty, it was the residence of a governor with the title of *serdár*, who, for his power and the importance of his territories, ranked among the highest officers of Persia, until it fell during the last war into the hands of the Russian emperor. By him it has been made the capital of the province of Armenia, which we found governed by an Armenian with the title of prince, and the rank of a general in the army. It is situated at a distance of many miles from the Aras, in a broken valley through which flows the river Zengy, the outlet of the lake of Seván, (called in Turkish *Gökcheh derya*, or Azure sea.) Surrounded on the north by arid and sunburnt mountains which concentrate the rays of the sun, its situation is in the summer extremely hot, and proverbial for intermittent fevers, and the affections of the liver that accompany them. But sickness has here its usual attendant of fertility. Eriván is not less proverbial for its fruits, than for its diseases. Though we had found neither vineyards nor wine since leaving Nakhcheván, all the sunny hills

which compose the valley around this city, were covered with vines. Some situations are so warm as to allow them to remain exposed to the air the whole winter, but generally they were now slightly covered with leaves or straw. Among the fruits in the bazár, (which were the same as at Nakhcheván,) melons and apples were uncommonly fine, and the latter, unless my taste had become corrupted by the miserable specimens which the Mediterranean affords, would even compare with the productions of American orchards.

The citadel is separate from the city, at the distance of perhaps a quarter of a mile to the south, and is almost a distinct town. Surrounded by merely a mud wall and a trench, on ground sloping but slightly away from it, it presents to the spectator from the east an appearance of little strength. But its western wall, standing on the brink of the river Zengy, which here flows through a remarkable chasm formed of high perpendicular ledges on either side, seems perfectly impregnable. The city itself is without walls, and though superior to Nakhcheván in the size and structure of its houses, has still an appearance of decay. Connected with our caravanserai was a large and apparently new bazár, consisting of two streets of shops crossing each other at right angles, arched over in the usual style with a succession of domes, and built of brick. But not even there, was there sufficient business doing to remove the impression made by our decayed caravanserai, that the trade of the place is in a languishing condition.

We met, at Echmiádzin, the bishop of Eriván, who is little more than a suffragan or chorepiscopus of the Catholics. He informed us that the province of Eriván now contains 14,002 families of Armenians and 8000 of moslems, inhabiting 502 villages. Whereas before the war, there were but 302 villages, and the number of families did not exceed 12,000 in all. The population of the city is said to be about 1800 moslem and 700 Armenian fam-

ilies.* We were prevented by ill health from visiting either the school in town, or that in the neighboring village of Ashterák.—There are now no relics of the branch of the Jesuit mission of Isfahán, which was established here in 1683 for the express purpose of converting the Catholics to the faith of Rome.† No papal Armenians are found in the province.

Nov. 19. We left Eriyán at half past 11 A. M. for Echmiádzin. Descending into the valley of the Zengy beneath the walls of the citadel, we crossed its transparent stream by a stone bridge. Cultivation, particularly of the vine, extended perhaps a mile beyond; and then, nothing but an undulating, uncultivated and gravelly soil succeeded, till we reached the convent; a distance of at least 12 miles from the city, in the direction of Erzroom.

* I am indebted for this estimate of the population of the city, to an article in the Asiatic Journal, by Klaproth. Vol 6: p. 108.

† Lett. Ed. et Cur. vol. 3: p. 421.

LETTER XV.

ECHMIADZIN.

St. Hripsime—Vagharshabád—Description of the convent—Our reception by the monks—The church—Ceremony of the mass—Doctrine of the mass—Communion—Confession—Pilgrimages—Accommodations of the vartabéds.

DEAR SIR,

THE ecclesiastical capital of the Armenians is called by the Turks, *Uch-keleeseh*, or the three churches; the number that actually first strikes the view of the traveller approaching from Eriván. Two of them are without the precincts of the convent, and of small dimensions. They are dedicated to the two virgins Hripsime and Kayane, who, with thirty-seven others, are reported by Armenian tradition to have fled from a nunnery at Rome, during the persecution under Diocletian, to Armenia; where Durtád, then a heathen and the creature of Diocletian, martyred them, on the spots now occupied by their churches.* Though Kayane was the abbess, Hripsime being of the imperial family of Claudius Cæsar, has been most honored by posterity, in the size of her church and the veneration of her relics. Her church, which is said to have been founded by St. Gregory Loosavorích, but has been often demolished and rebuilt since, stands just on the right of the road, perhaps

* The only other members of this celebrated sisterhood, whose names tradition seems to have preserved, were Noonj and Mani. They separated from the others. Noonj was the female captive that converted the Georgians to the faith; and Mani suffered martyrdom at Kemákh, in High Armenia.—See Mukhitár's Arm. Dict. and Mos. Choren. Lib. 2: c. 83.

half a mile before reaching the convent, and is a solidly built structure of hewn stone, bearing an appearance of much antiquity. The urn containing her relics, first deposited under the signet of St. Gregory, and afterward sealed also by Isaac the Great and the Catholicos Abraham, was in the seventeenth century pilfered by two Latin monks. All was recovered, however, by the bereaved monks of Echmiádzin, except four parts; one of which is now adored in the Armenian church at Venice, another is treasured up by the Latin friars at Goa in Hindostán, a third lies deposited under the foundations of a church near Nakhcheván, and the fourth, after remaining long at New Joolfah, found its way at last, through the hands of a pearl merchant of Bagdád, into a church in Galata of Constantinople.*

Between the church of St. Hripsime and the convent, and just without the walls of the latter, is the village of Vagharshabád, once the royal, as the adjoining monastery now is the patriarchal, capital of the country. It existed many centuries under the name of Vartkés, but was rebuilt in the second century and called Vagharshabád, or the city of Vaghársh, by a king of that name, and became for more than a century the residence of his successors.† It presents nothing but a crowded collection of mud cabins, perhaps 500 in number; and the royal city of Vaghársh is now the exclusive property of the successors of St. Gregory.

The convent derives its name from the church which it incloses, and in the supposed sanctity of which it had its origin. *Echmiádzin* is an Armenian sentence which means, *the Only Begotten descended*, and the church is so called in commemoration of a pretended appearance of the Savior to St. Gregory Loosavorích, upon the spot where it is

* Chamcheán, P. 3: c. 15, 24. P. 4: c. 17. P 7: c. 9.

† Chamcheán, P. 1: c. 5. P. 3: c. 13. St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 115.

built. It claims to have been founded by the saint himself more than 1500 years ago, and local legend even pretends that the original structure was built on a model showed him in the heavenly vision. What order the supernatural architecture assumed, however, we have not now an opportunity to know, for we are told that having gone to ruins it was restored and greatly improved by a subsequent Catholicos, in A. D. 618. Though always highly venerated, it did not become the seat of the Catholicoses until A. D. 1441, when Armenia proper seceded from the jurisdiction of the see of Sis. Since then it has ever remained the ecclesiastical metropolis of the nation.*

The whole of the premises are surrounded by a high wall flanked with circular towers, and have externally the appearance of a fortress. Within, is a city in miniature. The principal edifices, of different ages and styles, and containing the cells of the monks, magazines, refectories, and various other apartments, surround a quadrangle about two hundred and twenty feet square, in the centre of which stands the church. From hence a gate on the south opens into an extensive yard, with barns and stables around it for horses and other animals, among which a number of camels were kneeling when we entered. Another passage on the same side leads into an open court, surrounded by a continuous building of two stories like a caravanserai, designed apparently for the accommodation of pilgrims. Two other passages open on the northern side. One is a private entry to a garden of considerable extent, surrounded on two sides by buildings, and considered the peculiar premises of the Catholicos. It has an air of retirement and comfort. The other conducts to the main gate in the eastern wall of the convent, through a bazar of forty or fifty shops, which being within its walls seems to form an integral part of the establishment.

* St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 116. Chamcheán, P. 4: c. 17. P. 7: c. 3.

We arrived with a letter from Serope, the present bishop of Astrakhán, to the Catholicos, and another to his secretary from the bishop of Aderbaiján. They were sent forward by Antonio, and the Catholicos immediately ordered the best room for our accommodation. The vartabéd, however, who as master of ceremonies was to execute the order, declared that the room was to be occupied by prince Bebutoff, the governor of the province, and his lady, who were expected in the evening, and another was given us in the back suite of apartments designed for pilgrims. It was good and honorable enough, perhaps, but its position was lonely and seemed completely to exclude us from whatever was going on among the inmates of the convent. The evening of our arrival being Friday, Antonio, probably more from a regard to his own appetite than ours, intimated to the servant who was appointed to attend upon us, that meat would be very acceptable for dinner. But the convent, we were assured, contained that day none but fasting food, and so we satisfied our hunger with boiled beans and peas and onions. Besides being incommoded by a diet so unfit for a stomach weakened by disease, we remembered what hospitality had done at Datev, and feared that this strictness was an indication that we were to find none of it here. The morning confirmed our suspicions. Every monk whom we met wore a sombre aspect, and passed us without a salutation. Antonio was told by one and another, that we were of the same school with the missionaries at Shoosha, who had come into these parts to convert the Armenians, and that he did wrong to connect himself with us, being thus in danger of imbibing our sentiments. In fact, non-intercourse seemed to be determined upon. Our food was sent to our room by a servant, and no vartabéd called on us. The catholicos did not invite us to wait upon him; of his secretary we heard nothing; and repeated overtures on our

part to obtain interviews with them and with others, were under various pretences frustrated.

The time of our visit to Echmiádzin was, in one respect, peculiarly fortunate, for we were there during some of its most splendid ceremonies. The governor, himself an Armenian holding the rank of prince and a general, arrived as was expected on Friday evening, in company with his lady; and on Saturday morning a mass was celebrated with great pomp for him to attend. The church itself added to the imposing ceremony, by its venerable structure. The main body of it, substantially built of hewn stone in the form of a cross, is surmounted by a dome in the best style of the cylindro-conical order already described. Its belfry, an antique tower terminated in several pyramidal turrets and loaded with bells, rests upon massive square columns, which form the porch to the main entrance at the western extremity. Within, four enormous pillars descending from the circumference of the dome, uphold it with all the lofty vaults which support the roof. Portraits of saints, and sketches of scripture and legendary events, cover its walls, and by their grotesque design and clumsy execution, contribute to deepen the impression of the monkish scene. One venerable father stands forth in perfect nudity, except that a monstrous beard, extending to the ground, performs one of the most necessary uses of dress. Numerous silver lamps and a few glass chandeliers suspended from above, were on this occasion all lighted. More than half of the floor from the altar to the porch is enclosed by a railing for the special use of the clerical attendants, and was covered with carpets, some of which surpassed description in elegance and richness. The principal altar occupies a high elevation in a lofty alcove, or sanctuary, at the eastern extremity, and groined under massive gold crosses, silver candlesticks, and many other not less costly ornaments. Two sanctuaries of smaller di-

mensions are furnished with altars on either side of it, and one of them served this morning for a sacristy. In the middle of each of the side walls, too, is another sanctuary, or chapel, and still another small one occupies an isolated position in the middle of the floor, directly under the centre of the dome. The latter was surrounded by curtains of gold cloth of different patterns, and far surpassed every other part, in the exquisite finish and superlative richness of its furniture and ornaments. It is probably built upon the stone, respecting which Chardin reports a tradition of the Armenians, that it covers the hole where Christ, when he appeared to Loosavorích, thrust down to hell the evil spirits which formerly dwelt in the idol temples of Armenia.* In a word, the display of wealth this morning, in candlesticks, crosses, curtains, carpets and dresses, seemed to me not surpassed even by that which is made at the celebration of high mass in the church of St. John at Malta. The protestant Chardin and the papal Tournefort unite in testifying, that much of this wealth has come from the pope in the form of bribes for the conversion of the Catholicos; and now remains a monument of the credulity of the one, and the deception of the other.†

The dressing of the officiating bishop was the first important part of the mass, and a distinct prayer or meditation is said for every article of dress put on. But the ceremony being private, we witnessed only the chanting which was performed at the same time in the church. He then entered in a splendid flowing mantle of heavy gold cloth, with a broad upright collar stiff with gold, and a mitre of the same rich materials, ornamented in front and behind with a sun of brilliants set in gold. Having washed his hands before all, read a summary confession of his sins, and received absolution pronounced by an assistant, he re-

* Chardin, vol. 1: p. 175.

† Chardin, vol. 2: p. 173. Tournefort, vol. 2: p. 333.

tired again to the sacristy to prepare the wine and the bread for consecration. A little wine, not mixed with water as in the Latin church, is poured into a chalice; and a thin cake of bread, not leavened as in the Greek church, and stamped with various sacred symbols and letters, is placed on a small silver plate nicely fitted to the top of the cup. Each part of the ceremony has its appropriate prayer with the burning of incense, but a curtain, drawn before the sacristy, veiled the whole from our view. The time taken up was long, and during it the congregation were entertained by nothing but the monotonous chanting of a large company of deacons and clerks.

At length the bishop, leaving the elements behind, came forward with a pompous procession and the burning of incense, and proceeded in a circuitous course through the congregation to the great altar. After a series of prayers, a deacon read the lesson of the day from the Gospel, and the Nicene creed;* and then, with the whole body of as-

* Bishop Dionysius assures me that the Armenians do not use either the Apostles' or the Athanasian creed in their church services. The following is a literal translation of their version of the Nicene creed.

“ We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, of things visible and invisible.

“ And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; of God the Father, i. e. of the Father's substance, the only begotten; God of God; Light of Light; very God of very God; begotten, not created; consubstantial with the Father; by whom was created every thing in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible; who for us men, and for our salvation, descending from heaven, became incarnate, was made man, was perfectly born of the holy virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost; whereby he received body, spirit and mind, and whatever is in man, really and not in imagination. He suffered, was crucified, and buried; and on the third day he arose; and with that same body ascended to heaven, and sat down on the right hand of the Father: with that same body and the Father's glory, he shall come to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

“ And we believe in the Holy Ghost, the uncreated, the perfect. Who spake in the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospels. Who descended at Jordan, preached of him that is sent, and dwelt in the saints. And we believe in one only

sistants, went for the elements. They were brought, carefully veiled, accompanied by several pictures, and followed by a procession. The bishop, whose mitre had in the mean time been removed by an assistant, took them, and prayed; "Accept this offering from us, and perfect it for the mystery of the body and blood of thine only begotten Son; grant that this bread and this cup may be a means of the remission of sin to those who taste." The congregation being in the mean time exhorted to salute and kiss each other for the appearance of Christ, a deacon, taking the salutation from the bishop, went and saluted the Catholicos, and from him the ceremony passed through the whole congregation, each one bowing this way and that over the other's shoulder, as if to kiss him.

The consecration followed. In performing it the bishop *blessed* the bread by making over it the sign of the cross, *gave thanks* by looking upward, *brake it* by picking out a crumb, and repeated the transubstantiating words, "*take, eat, this is my body,*" lifting it at the same time above his head for the congregation to worship, instead of giving it to them to eat. The ceremony for the wine was similar. The whole was performed privately, with the back of the officiator toward the congregation, and not a word or a sign intended for them to hear or see, except the elevation of the elements. Prayers for the efficacy of the mass to be applied to the communicants, to all believers whether living or dead, and especially to any for whom a particular remembrance had been requested, followed. Then the bishop, having first dipped the bread in the wine, took it between the thumb and fore-finger of each hand, and, holding the cup also between the palms of his hands, turned to the

Catholic and Apostolic church: In one baptism for repentance, forgiveness and remission of sins: In the resurrection of the dead, and the eternal judgment to soul and body: In the Kingdom of Heaven; and the life everlasting." See Jamakirk.

congregation, and cried ; “ Holy, holy, let us with holiness taste of the honored body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which, descending from heaven, is divided among us. This is life, hope, resurrection, propitiation and remission of sins.” Turning, he replaced the elements upon the altar, and a splendid curtain, large enough to veil the whole front of the sanctuary being drawn, prevented us from witnessing what followed, except the chanting of the assistants in a semicircle before the altar. But, according to the canon, he had first to break the bread into four parts, and kiss it with weeping ; and then, after sundry prayers and supplications, to eat the bread and drink the wine with fear and trembling ; saying, “ May thy incorruptible body be life unto me, and thy holy blood, a propitiation and remission of sins.” The curtain being then withdrawn, a deacon cried, “ Approach with fear and faith, and with holiness commune ;” and as the bishop turned around with the elements, the clerks on the part of the people cried, “ Our God and our Lord has appeared unto us, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Eight or ten women came forward and communed ; and bits of unconsecrated bread were distributed, as is customary also in the Greek church, among the rest of the congregation, as they dispersed.

The ceremony occupied an hour and forty minutes. The lesson from the gospel was read toward the congregation, and with tolerable distinctness, though in a chanting tone ; and it was gratifying to notice the marked stillness, which, as is always the case during this part of the service, prevailed among the audience. Now and then, too, a sentence from a deacon was addressed to them, and the bishop frequently turned round, to wave a little silver cross, and cry, “ peace be with you.” But most of the prayers were private, and said in an inaudible tone ; and the others were often completely drowned by the chanting of a

company of some twenty or thirty clerks, straining their discordant voices to the highest pitch. To complete the confusion, four or five deacons standing on the right side of the altar, accompanied the most important parts with the ginging of a quantity of small silver bells, attached to the circumference of circular plates upon the end of long sticks which they held in their hands; and large bells, suspended in the dome, repeatedly added their deafening intonations. Candles were lighted and extinguished at the proper moment, and the use of the censer, both at the altar and among the audience, was liberal. The whole bore no slight resemblance to a theatrical pantomime, and was evidently calculated, not to be united in as a devotional service, but to be gazed at and worshiped. In fact during every part, the more devout of the assembly frequently prostrated themselves and kissed the ground, with many signs of the cross; and when the elements were formally held up before them after the consecration, the most profound and idolatrous adoration was exhibited by nearly all; some with their foreheads to the ground, and others kneeling with their hands suppliantly extended, their eyes directed to the adored object, and their countenances marked with an aspect of most earnest entreaty. It seemed, in a word, more objectionable in every feature than any papal mass I ever witnessed.—After remaining some time unnoticed among the crowd, we were invited within the railing among the vartabéds and the general's suite, and a vartabéd directed Antonio to ask me, (Mr. Dwight being elsewhere engaged,) to come and kiss the cross. He considered himself clothed with sufficient discretionary power, however, to give my refusal, and I was not troubled with the request.

With such pompous ceremonies does the Armenian church turn into a solemn farce, the celebration of that simple ordinance, at the institution of which, "the Lord

Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and, when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me; and after the same manner also the cup when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood, this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." Nor is the *doctrine* of the church respecting its nature and object less erroneous. It believes, as fully as does the papal church, in the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the real body and blood of Christ; and not only so, but with that church it also believes, that the human soul and the divinity of our Lord, as well as his body, are present in the elements. Thus, instead of being regarded as a simple memento of the atoning death of our Savior, this sacrament is converted, contrary to every evidence of the senses and of reason, into a renewal of that death itself, and considered an actual propitiatory sacrifice of Christ for the living and the dead! Let the following extract from a prayer which follows the consecration, testify to the extent of the efficacy that is ascribed to it. "May this [the elements of the mass] be for justification, propitiation, and remission of sins to all of us who draw near. Through it, grant love, stability, and desired peace to the whole world; to the holy church, and all orthodox bishops, priests and deacons; to kings, the world, princes and people; to travellers and seamen; to those who are bound, in danger and in trouble; and to those who are fighting with barbarians. Through it, also, grant to the air mildness, to the fields fertility, and to them who are afflicted with diverse diseases, speedy relief. Through it, give rest to all who are already asleep in Christ, first parents, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, bishops, elders, deacons, and all the members of the holy church. With them also visit us, we pray thee, O thou

beneficent God.”* Indeed, in the language already quoted respecting masses for the dead, ‘that which Christ offered, and that which the priests offer, is regarded as the same sacrifice.’

How directly does this whole theory of the mass stand in the face of the apostle’s argument, that Christ, unlike the daily sacrifices of the Jewish dispensation, after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God! (Heb. 10th chap.) By it the gospel is subverted, and the ‘weak and beggarly elements’ of the old Jewish system of sacrifices are revived. The real death of Christ comes to be practically neglected, or regarded as little more than a simple antidote to original sin, and the forgiveness of actual sin is expected from the imagined sacrifice of the mass, the most absurd dogma that was ever palmed upon human credulity. It substitutes a priesthood to offer sacrifices, for a ministry to feed the flock of God with sound doctrine; it converts the spiritual worship of God into the formal adoration of a ceremony; it leads to idolatry. In a word, of all the heresies, absurdities and abominations of the papal and oriental churches, the mass is the chief.

From this perversion of the design of the sacrament of the supper, and the consequent idea that to partake of the elements is not essential to its celebration, the neglect of communion has naturally followed. Although, in parishes which have a sufficient number of priests, mass is performed almost every day, it is customary for none except the officiators to communicate more than twice a year, the occasions usually selected being Christmas and Easter. The limit of frequent attendance upon communion, is seven times, and of rare attendance, once a year. Great efficacy, however, is ascribed to the ceremony, and the consecrated elements are carried, as a viaticum, to the bedside

* See the Armenian Missal, called Khorhurtadedr.

of the dying, with the idea that to partake of them is essential to the future happiness of the soul. The communicants this morning stood up before the altar, and the bishop put a bit of the bread, which had been previously dipped in the wine, into the mouth of each. In this way only do the Armenians communicate in both kinds. The wine they never drink. One of the women had a child not more than a year old in her arms, and that also communicated; for infants, from the moment of baptism, are admissible to the table of the Lord.

The Armenian, like the papal and the Greek churches, practises close communion. It is indeed inconsistent with its admission of the possibility of salvation out of the church; and the inconsistency seemed to be felt by more than one intelligent ecclesiastic with whom we conversed. One contended that it was the duty of priests to admit members of other sects, without first confessing them; and affirmed that Russians, as they spoke only a foreign language, had been thus admitted in his convent, upon their declaring simply that they had already confessed. Another declared, that Armenians were allowed to commune with other sects, when in parts of the world where no Armenian church is found; and that foreigners are admissible to the Armenian communion upon their confessing and making a profession of their faith. This, however, is conceding nothing, for the act of confessing to an Armenian priest, is equivalent to becoming a member of that church, and it would be a strange sect that should refuse to admit proselytes. Should an Armenian in ordinary circumstances receive the sacrament of the supper from the hands of a protestant, or a minister of any other sect, he would be considered as cut off, by that act, from his church, and not admissible again to her bosom, without confessing his sin, and doing penance for it.

Confession is an indispensable preparation for the com-

munion, and is now practised only immediately before it. The women who communicated this morning, had all confessed, during the first part of the mass, to a vartabéd in the western end of the church. He had no confessional, nor have we seen one in any Armenian church. Seated on the floor *a la Turque*, he caused each one successively to kneel by his side, with her head in his lap; and then, putting his hand upon her head, listened to her confession. In another instance, we have seen a confessor, in the presence of company, reclining upon his arm, with the woman he was confessing kneeling by his side, her head being upon his bosom, and his arm upon her person. The substance of the confession is more objectionable than the position of the parties. A prescribed form, the same that follows the creed already quoted, at the commencement of morning prayers in the church, is in every case repeated *memoriter*, or from the mouth of the confessor. A regard to decency forbids its publication entire. With a few expressions omitted, and the indelicacy of others somewhat modified in giving it an English dress, it is as follows.

“I have sinned against the most holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and I confess before God, and the holy mother of God, and before thee, holy father, all the sins I have committed. For I have sinned in thought, in word, and in deed; voluntarily, and involuntarily; knowingly, and ignorantly. I have sinned against God.—I have sinned with my spirit and its faculties; with my mind and its acts; with my body and its senses. I have sinned with the faculties of my spirit: by cunning, and by folly; by audacity, and by cowardice; by prodigality, and by avarice; by dissipation, and by injustice; by love of evil, by desperation, and by mistrust. I have sinned against God.—I have sinned with the evil devices of my mind: by artifice, by malice, by vindictiveness, by envy, by jealousy, by dissoluteness, by unchaste propen-

sities, ***** and by abominable filthiness of imagination. I have sinned against God.—I have sinned with the lusts of my body: by sensuality, by sloth, by the yawning of sleep; by the acts of the body, and by the commission of divers kinds of impurity; by the licentious hearing of my ears, by the shamelessness of my eyes, by the lusts of my heart, *** by the lasciviousness of my mouth, by incontinence, by gluttony, and by drunkenness. I have sinned against God.—I have sinned with the evil speaking of my tongue; by lying, by false swearing, by perjury, by contentiousness, by disputing, by defamation, by flattery, by tale-bearing, by idleness, by mockery, by vain conversation, by talking heresy, by cursing, murmuring, complaining, back-biting, and blaspheming. I have sinned against God.—I have sinned with every joint of my frame, and every member of my body: with my seven senses, and my six operations; by kicking upward, by dangling downward, by straying to the right, and to the left, by sinning against what is before, and being a bad example to what is behind. I have sinned against God.—I have also sinned by [committing] the seven transgressions, the mortal sins: by pride and its varieties; by envy and its varieties; by anger and its varieties; by sloth and its varieties; by covetousness and its varieties; by gluttony and its varieties; by lasciviousness and its varieties. I have also sinned against all the commands of God, both the positive and the negative; for I have neither done what is commanded, nor abstained from what is forbidden. I have received the law, and have come short of it. I have been invited to the rights of Christianity, and by my conduct have been found unworthy; knowing the evil, I have voluntarily debased myself, and of myself have departed from good works. Ah me! ah me! ah me! which shall I tell? or which shall I confess? For my transgressions cannot be numbered, my iniquities cannot be told; my pains are irremissible, my

wounds are incurable. I have sinned against God.—Holy father, I have thee for an intercessor, and a mediator of reconciliation with the only begotten Son of God ; that by the power given unto thee thou wouldest loose me from the bonds of my sins, thee I supplicate.”*

Such are the sins that every Armenian, male and female, young and old, acknowledges in the ear of his priest at confession, and hears confessed for him every morning that he attends church : sins, some of which would otherwise hardly enter the imagination, but which being thus suggested, doubtless soon become so familiar that the acknowledgement of them is no longer a falsehood. The document is the nation’s own confession of its immoralities ; and, either as causes which occasioned it to be drawn up, or as effects resulting from its frequent rehearsal, the supposition is but reasonable, that those immoralities exist. The fact, however, that a large part of it is veiled by a dead language in an obscurity impenetrable to the common people, hides some of the darkest shades of the picture.†

* Jamakirk, p. 6.

† Since the above was written, a papal friend has referred me to the Table of Sins inserted in the common prayer-books of his church, to aid the penitent in his preparation for confession, by suggesting to him what sins he needs to confess. Perhaps this Armenian form of confession was originally intended only for a similar purpose, and had a similar shape.—If any reader is disgusted, that such an offensive document should be raked up from the dead language of Armenia, to be set before him in this enlightened land ; it may be well for him to know, that one similarly offensive is in the hands of every devout papist among us, and may be found in the Roman Catholic book-store in Boston, and in similar places in our other cities. If he can do it with a pure heart, let him read the Table of Sins and the other directions for confession, in the Christian’s Guide to Heaven, the Key of Paradise, and other popular Roman Catholic prayer-books ; and reflect upon the corrupting tendency of auricular confession ; especially when that confession is made by youth of either sex to an unmarried clergy. Particularly let every protestant parent do this, before putting his children into the hands of papists to be educated.

Even after the rehearsal of such a long catalogue of crimes, an extemporaneous confession of the particular sins that burden the conscience, is generally demanded by the confessor. In the cases that we witnessed this morning, however, no such demand was made; and the vartabéd pronounced the absolution upon each woman, as she finished repeating from his mouth what I have quoted above. The form of absolution is as follows. “May a compassionate God have mercy upon thee. May he pardon all thy confessed and forgotten sins. And I, by right of my priestly authority, and the divine command, ‘Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven;’ by that same word, do absolve thee from all connection with thy sins, of thought, of word, and of deed; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And I admit thee again to the sacraments of the holy church; and whatever good thou shalt do, may it be to thee for a good work, and in the future life for glory. Amen.*” In these few words lies the whole secret of priestly power. Were they blotted out from the ritual of the church, the priesthood, like Samson shorn of his locks, would become weak, and be like any other men. The pretended power of loosing men from their sins, gives them the real power of binding upon their shoulders ‘heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne.’ It is firmly believed by the people generally, that when the priest pronounces this absolution, their sins are really forgiven. *Satisfaction*, the last of the three parts into which the doctors of Rome have divided the sacrament of penance,† and of which *confession* is the second, is also acknowledged and practised by the Armenian church, and will come under consideration hereafter. The first part, or

* Jamakírk, p. 9.

† See that very valuable compendium of the doctrines of papacy, the Text-Book of Popery. By J. M. Cramp, p. 184—205.

contrition of heart for sin, it is to be feared, is rarely considered essential, and still more rarely felt.

The Armenians have uniformly declared, in answer to our inquiries, that in their church money is never paid at confession. And yet, each of these women did certainly, before our eyes, put a piece of money into the hand of the *vartabéd*, either immediately before or after the absolution. The reason of it was, perhaps, that they were pilgrims, and the communion being the finishing act of their pilgrimage, they took this occasion to pay to the convent the contribution always expected from such visitors. Pilgrimages are in high repute among the Armenians, as a species of good works. The most meritorious are made to Jerusalem, to the convent of *Soorp Hovhannes Garabéd* (St. John the Forerunner) near Moosh, and to Echmiádzin. He who has acquired the title of *mukdesy* by visiting the former place, stands in the estimation of his countrymen far above the common standard of sanctity. These great pilgrimages, however, are not so common as formerly. Still, almost every convent, or other place, where a saint has died or his relics are preserved, is visited more or less frequently for this superstitious purpose.

Having brought a letter from an Armenian friend at Smyrna to one of the oldest bishops of the convent, we caused it to be presented to him on the afternoon of Saturday. It procured us an invitation to call on him, and an opportunity to see the accommodations of the highest members of the convent. He was sitting with the librarian and the bishop of Eriván, in a spacious and airy chamber, furnished with every thing that oriental custom considers necessary to comfort. A broad and well covered Turkish sofa occupied two sides of the room, a good carpet covered the floor, and a series of shelves above were ornamented with the various rich fruits of the country for the gratification of the eye as well as the taste. Servants await-

ed his commands in an anti-chamber, and brought us the temperate refreshments usually offered to a visitor in Turkey. Every thing had an air of ease, if not of luxury, little corresponding with the ideas usually entertained of the cell of a monk, and confirming what we in other ways learned, that the leading inmates of this establishment practise few of the self-denials for which their profession is reputed. His reception of us was friendly, and his answers to our questions unreserved. The information we derived from him, for the sake of better arrangement, is given elsewhere.

LETTER XVI.

ECHMIADZIN.

Festival of the Catholicos—His sacrifice—Origin of his title and see—His election—The present Catholicos—His duties and sources of income—Ordination of bishops—The meiron—The Novirág—Power of the Catholicos—Interview with the vartabéds—Essential articles of faith—Conditions of salvation—Mode of baptism—Confirmation—Extreme unction—Conversation upon our own religious rites—Commencement of the Armenian Sabbath—Ideas of missions—Library of the convent—Character of the secretary of the Catholicos—Return to Nahkcheván.

DEAR SIR,

ON leaving the room of the bishop, mentioned at the close of my last letter, we found the monks, in their gayest clerical robes, paraded in double file along the pavement, which leads to the church door from the entry to the apartments of the Catholicos. It appeared, on inquiry, that to-morrow was to be the twentieth anniversary festival of his inauguration, and that they were now about to conduct him in pomp to evening prayers, as the commencement of the ceremonies of the occasion. He soon came forward tottering with the decrepitude of age, and, leaning upon the arms of attendants, was led through their ranks. A gold cross only upon his cowl, and a staff, his badge of office, in his hand, distinguished him from rest. Two attendants held a broad canopy of crimson over his head, and two or three deacons, going backward before him, perfumed him continually with incense. It was the pope of Armenia in festal show. The mass on Sabbath morning, which constituted the essential part of the festival, was

in some respects more pompous than the one already described, and the dresses used being different, it served to exhibit more fully the wealth of the establishment. The Catholicos acted no part in it, but to go to the altar to receive the blessing, and to kiss the gospel. A rich cross of jewels, however, upon one of its covers, actually received the salutation; and thus, in this ceremony, as it has done in most of the observances of the church, it robbed the word of God of its honors. The same device is generally observable in the copies of the gospel that are used in other churches. We now stood near enough to the officiating bishop, to observe also another curious device. The missal from which he read the prayers, was placed a little on one side, and directly before him upon the altar, was a small richly ornamented picture of the virgin, with the infant Jesus in her arms, so that all his prayers were said as if addressed to that.

I have neglected to mention, that we presented our letter to the general, prince Bebutoff, on Saturday, and were received by him with marked civility. We expected that the circumstance would somewhat improve the vartabéd's treatment of us; but were still a little surprised, on coming from the church to-day, to be invited by the master of ceremonies into the apartments of the Catholicos, as we understood, to have an interview with him. The object, however, was different. On a broad pavement in his garden, by the side of a salient fountain, was a long line of tables, loaded with a cold collation of meats, pastries and confectionaries. One was placed at the head for the Catholicos, but he was absent. By the rest stood a crowd of vartabéd's and numerous guests; and in the garden around, was paraded a line of peasants, armed with muskets. As we entered, a vartabéd, seizing us by the arm, led us to the table next that of the Catholicos, where stood the general and his lady. They welcomed us politely, and informed us

that this was the *sacrifice* of the Catholicos, who was himself too feeble to be present.

A long prayer was now read by a vartabéd, and concluded by a toast, which was drunk with brandy, and accompanied by a salute from the guns of the peasants. Hardly considering ourselves forbidden by apostolic authority to partake, though the general had intimated that it was offered in sacrifice; we seriously set about eating of the good things before us, asking no questions. But as the prince and ourselves were settling the etiquette of priority in inserting the knife and fork, a vartabéd invited us, for better fare, to retire with himself and his companions; and, on looking about, we found that every morsel had mysteriously disappeared from the other tables. Following the crowd, we entered a long and gloomy arched hall, the grand refectory of the monks. Two stone tables extended its whole length, at which we seated ourselves, in company with more than thirty in the garb of vartabéds, and perhaps double the number of lay guests. But not a morsel of food, nor a dish, was upon them; and as each of our neighbors unrolled from his handkerchief his gleanings of the cold collation, we began to fear lest, not having made such provision ourselves, we should fare but badly.

Plain but substantial dishes of meat and pilávs, followed by a variety of confectionaries, were soon served up, to the abundant satisfaction of our hunger; and a vartabéd, continually passing to and fro between the tables, with a jar of wine, occasioned a flow of mirth from some of our fellow-guests, which proved that the kindred appetite had no reason to complain. The dessert was addressed solely to another sense, usually not so exclusively provided for upon similar occasions. It was a single apple, which each smelled of, and then passed to his neighbor. The mind was also fed during the repast, by a long story about Echemiádzin, read by a monk from a sort of orchestra above us.

A still longer oration followed, pronounced from a manuscript by the vartabéd at the head of the table, and containing, we imagined from its length and the names that occurred, a relation of events in general, from Adam to prince Bebutoff. A toast, followed by the blessing, finished the ceremonies. The peasants who filled the court without, accompanied the toast with a straggling salute of musketry; and a band of strolling musicians added their discordant notes, to complete the deafening confusion.—Such was the Sabbath we spent at Echmiádzin, the residence of the head of the Armenian church, and esteemed the most holy spot in the country! and such the profanation of that sacred day, not committed by uncontrollable contemners of religious order, but directed as an appendage to a religious ceremony, by the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries of the nation! We had already observed in the morning, that five or six of the shops in the bazár of the convent, were open for the sale of goods.

The term *Catholicos* occurs early in ecclesiastical history, as the title of an office in the church, and was originally a mere Greek adjective, connected with the word *episcopos*, to designate a bishop who presided over a *whole* region. For, while the *patriarchs* of Alexandria and Antioch, and the *primates* of Ephesus, Heraclea and Cesarea, presided over the five dioceses of Egypt, the East, Asia, Thrace, and Pontus, into which the eastern Roman empire was divided by Constantine the Great, we find likewise *catholicoses* at the head of different sections of the church, without the limits of the empire. The metropolitan of Persia, and the archbishop of Seleucia, first bore the title, acknowledging still their dependence upon the see of Antioch. And in imitation of them, probably, the head of the Armenian and Georgian churches afterward assumed it.* Armenian tradition pretends that St. Gregory, in a personal

* Assemani Bibliotheca Orientalis, Tom. 4: p. 615.

visit to Silvester, bishop of Rome, was consecrated by him Catholicos, with the express privilege that his successors might be consecrated by their own bishops;* though it concedes that that ceremony was, until A. D. 366, actually performed by the primates of Cesarea, of whose diocese Armenia was still an appendage. Then, Nerses the Great was declared by the king, nobles, and bishops, sovereign Catholicos of the nation, and his successors have never since been dependent upon any foreign dignitary for their consecration or their power.† For that blundering inversion of the relative rank of ecclesiastical titles, which has created patriarchs inferior to a Catholicos, who was himself once dependent upon only a primate, the church is indebted to moslem ignorance or heedlessness.

No laws of election, or of succession to the office, for a long time existed; and acknowledged merit or successful intrigue, influencing the rulers, nobles, or clergy, (as each or all wished or were able to interfere,) to an informal expression of public approbation, seems alone to have determined the choice. To its validity, also, the approbation of the foreign sovereign to whom the nation happened at the time to be subject, was necessary from the beginning; and in return for this approbation, an annual tribute was, as early as A. D. 1058, demanded by the Greek emperor.‡ But, on the occasion of the secession of the bishop of Aghtamár, it was determined in a formal council, that thenceforward the unanimous consent of the four great sees of Puchni, Haghpad, Tuteós Arakeál and Datev, should be necessary to the election of a Catholicos;§ and we were informed on the spot, that the same sees are still represent-

* Chamcheán, P. 3: c. 15. † Ibid. P. 3: c. 18. ‡ Ibid. P. 5: c. 15.

§ Ibid. P. 6: c. 4.—Puchni is still a considerable convent a few hours from Eriván, on the direct road to Tiflis by the Red Bridge. (See Charadin, vol. 1: p. 159. And Tournefort, vol. 2: p. 330.) The others have been already mentioned.

ed in an assembly of twelve bishops, by whom the choice is now made, the remaining eight being members of the convent. The necessity, however, of the approbation of a foreign sovereign, which intrigue and money could at any time obtain, or cause to be withheld, has often made the law a dead letter, and thrown the decision into the hands of one aspiring individual, or of a few quarrelsome monks. In fact, after the revival of the modern kingdom of Persia under the Sofies, Echmiádzin became as complete a prey to ambitious dissensions and barefaced bribery, as did the patriarchate of Constantinople under the Osmanlies; several pretended to the office of Catholicos at the same time, and the convent was loaded with immense debts.

The present Catholicos, Ephraim, wisely sought security from these evils before accepting the office. The sum of about £400 sterling, was stipulated as the unalterable amount of the annual tribute to the Shah; and, being bishop of a Russian diocese at the time of his election, he naturally sought the protection of the emperor. It was readily granted by Alexander in a personal audience, and the new Catholicos entered upon his functions, decorated with the insignia of grand cross of the order of St. Catharine, and clothed in embroidered pontifical robes, the fruits of imperial munificence.* The protection thus formally promised, was, in an hour of need, not refused. Finding himself exposed to lawless depredations during the war between Turkey and Persia, in 1822, he succeeded in escaping into the Russian territories, where he was honorably received, and resided, principally in the convent of Haghpad, until the late peace with Persia placed Echmiádzin permanently under the Russian government. He was consecrated in 1810, and is now eighty-one years old, and nearly deaf and blind. Mr. Zarembo, in his late visit, had two gratifying interviews with him, and found him thankful

* Avdall's translation of Chamcheán, vol. 2: p. 519.

for what the missionaries has done for his nation, and grieved even to tears that he had not now such bishops as formerly for his coadjutors. He has, in fact, always been reputed for mildness and tolerance, which increased our regret at being denied the opportunity of a personal interview. His infirmities were aggravated, by the fatigues of the festival, into a distressing illness, and obliged him at last to decline receiving us. He did it with an expression of regret, at being under the necessity of treating thus the first Americans who had ever visited his convent.

But while I am able to speak thus in favor of the Catholicos as an individual, I must warn you that the administration of his see partakes very little of his character. So long ago as when Martyn was here, it appears that Nerses had contrived, in the name of a synod which he had formed three years before, to get the management of it so completely into his hands, as to reduce the personal influence of the Catholicos to a cypher. Upon his banishment, the synod effectively assumed the rights with which he had nominally invested it, and has since been the only seat of power in the convent. It consists regularly of twelve members, though when we were there its numbers were reduced by vacancies to ten, seven of whom were bishops, and three vartabéds. The present character of its measures you will have learned from the recent events at Shoosha.

The peculiar duties of the Catholicos, which also indicate the extent of his power, and the chief sources of his income, are, *to ordain bishops*, and *to consecrate the meirón*. Whoever wishes for episcopal ordination, in any part of the nation, except within the narrow limits of the dioceses of Sis and of Aghtamár, seeks it at Echmiádzin. The ceremony is performed by the Catholicos, aided by six bishops. And as it is not required that every candidate have a diocese in view, but merely present a certificate from his

convent that it has need of his services as a bishop, the number of applicants is sufficient to stock almost every convent with idle bishops, and to bring considerable revenue into the treasury of Echmiádzin. For the gift that is communicated by the laying on of hands, is not gratuitous. In the absence of sufficient data for an average of the price of ordination, I can only give the following items. One bishop is credibly reported to have given 200 ducats, (about \$450,) besides another hundred (about \$225,) at the same time, for a mass for the soul of his deceased predecessor. Another bishop declared to us, that in his own case he gave nothing for ordination. But on his arrival at the convent, he made to the Catholicos a large present of cloth, cutlery, and whatever else of choice value the place from which he came afforded, together with a sum of money, called 'kissing the hands.' He then solicited the favor of distributing something among the bishops and vartabéds of the convent; and the Catholicos, saying 'you need not give yourself the trouble,' appointed a bishop to direct him how much to give to each. Thus three or four thousand piastres were expended. For the mass on the day of his ordination he gave also three or four hundred; and a dinner for all the monks, which followed, cost nearly a thousand more. Being from Jerusalem, he probably paid less than usual.

The *meirón* is the holy oil which is used at confirmation, ordination, and various other ceremonies, and is one of the principal superstitions of the Armenians. Its sanctity is commonly believed to be miraculously attested, by its being made to boil by the mere ceremony of consecration. The boiling of the *meirón*, indeed, is to Echmiádzin, what the light from the holy sepulchre is to Jerusalem; though less superstition is required to believe the former than the latter. For, without attributing any very wonderful properties to the bit of the true cross, or to St. Gregory's hand,

which are used upon the occasion, the oil may be made, by the many other ingredients which are put into it at its consecration, to exhibit all the phenomena of boiling; while, although the light at the sepulchre may originate without fire, from phosphorus or the rays of the sun, to separate from it the property of burning, can only be done by a superstitious imagination. Not only is the value of the meirón enhanced by many incredible stories of its miraculous properties and effects; but it is made by the laws of the church absolutely necessary to several ordinances, especially to that of confirmation; and, being a complete monopoly, it becomes not an unprofitable speculation. It is carried through the nation by a *novirág*, or nuncio, who is a vartabéd or bishop appointed to collect contributions for the convent. Such agents are sent very frequently wherever the Armenians are scattered, to urge the claims of Echmiádzin upon the purses of all the spiritual children of St. Gregory; and they are peculiarly successful, when they carry in their pocket a bottle of meirón. For the sacred gift is often carefully withheld until the people have produced what the agent is pleased to consider their quota of the contribution.

In the vicinity of Echmiádzin, there seems to be little less than a formal sale of it. The vartabéd who visited Shoo-sha while we were there, not only acted as wekeel of the Catholicos, for the suppression of heresy, but was clothed with the more profitable office of *novirág*, for the collection of contributions, and the distribution of the meirón. Delegates of the different villages visited him, and while the contribution was fixed at so much per head, the conditions of their receiving the meirón were settled in a manner not unlike a formal bargain in trade. If the few data that came to our knowledge afford a correct general average, the province of Kara-bagh contributed upon that occasion to the treasury of Echmiádzin, not far from ten thousand dol-

lars. St. James's at Jerusalem is the only other Armenian convent, which custom allows to employ novirágs to increase its funds. One of them was in this vicinity at the time of our journey; and although his convent does not manufacture meirón, he was not without an expedient for enforcing its claims. He argued in his preaching, it was said, that all departed spirits have to take Jerusalem in their way to heaven; and that none are allowed by St. James to pass, except such as have contributed to his convent! In reaping the harvest for his employers, the novirág of either convent always gleans copiously for himself. For not only is he entitled to the profits of every mass he says, and to some other special contributions, but no vouchers being required to the accounts he renders at the termination of his mission, the widest door is opened for embezzlement. And it is a well known fact, at Jerusalem, that almost every novirág returns rich.

Among the other sources of the Catholicos's income, pilgrimages, and the glebes of the convent, may be mentioned. Every pilgrim is expected to pay, according to his ability, for the privilege of visiting the shrine of the holy Illuminator. The domains of Echmiádzin formerly embraced twenty-three villages, if we may believe the secretary of the Catholicos, who affirmed that its claims to that number were attested by written documents from the Shah. He said, however, that it had *presented* to the emperor all of them but three. Among the three retained, is the large village of Vagharshabád. The convent receives the capitation tax of a ducat, and twenty per cent. of the produce.—You need not be reminded, that the Catholicos receives all this income, as head of the convent, and that, of course, all the expenses of that extensive establishment must be drawn from it. The sum to be thus deducted, considering the number and character of its inmates cannot be small. When we were there, the convent contain-

ed fourteen bishops, forty-five or fifty vartabéds, and seven or eight deacons.

The patriarchal power of the Catholicos, in the appointment of bishops to their dioceses and the direct control of their duties as diocesans, has never, so far as we are informed, extended over the Armenians in Turkey, since the establishment of the patriarchate of Constantinople. Still, wherever the Armenians venerate him as the spiritual head of their church, are governed by bishops of his ordination, depend upon him for their meirón, and send to him their contributions at the call of his novirágs, his influence cannot be small. These relations the whole nation, with the exception of the small dioceses of Aghtamár and Sis, formerly sustained to him. But since he has become a subject of Russia, the Turkish Armenians have felt themselves forced by the Sultán's jealousy of Russian espionage and influence, to renounce them. The patriarch of Constantinople informed us, in May of 1830, that for about two years they had ceased to have any communication with him, and even to mention his name in the mass. 'Not,' said he, 'that we have really deserted our Catholicos; we are still attached to him, and this is only a temporary measure, which circumstances have forced upon us.' Others affirmed that the Turks had been given to understand, that the Catholicos of Sis was now the head of the Armenian church in Turkey. You will wish, after learning the character of the present administration of Echmiádzin, that this disconnection were something more than a temporary pretence. It would certainly leave the Armenians of Turkey more open to the operations of missionaries. Even let its influence in that empire return to its former state, however, and it will hardly be sufficient to throw insurmountable obstacles in the way of missions.

The power which the Catholicos is to enjoy in Russia, has hardly yet been defined. We were assured that the

plan of an ecclesiastical establishment for the Armenians had been presented to the emperor and approved by him; but it was not yet promulgated, and we did not learn its provisions. At present, bishops are appointed to dioceses in the Russian territories, by the synod of Echmiádzin in connection with the civil power. The synod sends the names of two or three candidates to the emperor, and he selects one for the office. The following are the diocesans now subject to Russia, according to a statement given us by the secretary of the Catholicos, and agreeing with information from another intelligent gentleman; viz. the bishops of Bessarabia, Astrakhán, Tiflís, Akhaltsikhe, Eriván, Datev, Kántasar, Shámakhy, Sheky (subject to the bishop of Tiflís,) and Tateós Arakeál now at Nakhcheván. On the side of Persia, the secretary said there was a bishop at Tebriz, a second at Isfahán, and a third in Hindostán, with Bagdád and Bussorah under him. He added also a written list of twenty-three diocesans in Turkey; but owing, perhaps, to the constantly varying number and limits of the dioceses in that empire, we did not find it correct, and I shall not enumerate them. Indeed he warned us that the list for the Russian branch of the church, was true only for the present moment, as an order had just come down from the emperor, for an entirely new arrangement. In connection with our conversation upon the dioceses of his church, the secretary asked for our estimate of the number of his nation, and we mentioned about 2,000,000. He assented that such is the number usually written, but declared it to be his own opinion, that 10,000,000 would be nearer the truth; for, it being understood by all, that money was to be paid when bishops made their visits, great numbers concealed themselves, and thus failed of being recorded!

Monday morning found us still in the same state of non-intercourse with the members of the convent. We had

had a visit from no one, the Catholicos had not sent for us, and every effort, but one, on our part to procure an interview with individuals, or to see the curiosities of the convent, had failed. We now determined to make one more trial, and if unsuccessful, to depart. A request was accordingly sent to Hosep vartabéd, the librarian whom we had met with the bishop on Saturday, to show us the library. In reply, he invited us to call on him. We were conducted to the room which the general, who had left the evening before, had occupied, and found the vartabéd Hovhannes Sooreneán, the secretary of the Catholicos for whom we had brought a letter from the bishop of Aderbaján, and Lucas vartabéd, who had formerly been in Smyrna, together with one or two others, all evidently among the most active and intelligent members of the convent. Tea was served up, as a formal act of civility, in imitation of Russian customs in these provinces; but our reception was marked with much suspicion, and evidently intended to be very cold. The conversation was commenced by Hovhannes's inquiring the object for which we were travelling. We replied that it was to obtain information respecting Armenia and its inhabitants, especially the religious condition of the latter. He at first intimated, that for this a personal visit to the country could hardly be necessary, as it had often been described by travellers: but when we reminded him, that they had directed their investigations so exclusively to other objects of inquiry, as to leave us until now without a satisfactory account of the morals and religion of the Armenians; he admitted, that even in the antiquities of the country, they had made many mistakes, and declared that he was himself publishing a book at Tiflis, to throw light upon the antiquities of Haghpad, which might correct the errors of one traveller whom he named. He then intimated that in order to avoid similar errors, we ought to direct our inquiries to intelligent natives of the

country ; and thus gave us an opportunity to declare, that for that very object we had come to Echmiádzin.

Having obtained from us a declaration of the belief of our denomination, that Christ is God and man ; he affirmed that the trinity, and the divinity of Christ, are the two essential articles of Christian faith. The declaration accorded with a similar expression from the bishop of Datev, and reminds me to say, that the idea of *faith* commonly entertained by the Armenians, is a mere belief in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the name of whom they cross themselves ; or, at most, an assent to the creeds which are repeated daily in their churches. Of justifying faith they have no knowledge ; and when it is announced to them, they look upon it as almost as strange a doctrine, as did the philosophers of Athens upon those which Paul preached upon Mars-hill. We admitted that the trinity, and the divinity of Christ, are essential points ; but added that there was another, which we held to be not less important—the death of Christ for the sins of the world, that men through him might be saved. He barely assented that the Armenians believe that too, and passed to another inquiry, which evidently stood more prominent in his mind, and occupied the next place to the two articles he had already mentioned. It related to the perpetual virginity of Mary. We replied, that we all believe her to have been a virgin till her conception of Christ, because the Bible expressly affirms it ; but of her state afterward, as we have no ecclesiastical canons on the subject, some may incline one way and some another, according as they understand the Scriptures. He declared the belief of his church to be, that she was a virgin both before and after the birth of our Savior, and that she is the mother of God, but not born without original sin. Still his church would not pronounce those not to be Christians who believe differently.

The two things necessary for salvation, he said, were baptism and the communion. He afterward explained that their doctors distinguish three kinds of baptism, either of which is effectual; one, the actual application of water in the name of the Trinity; another, the wish of a moslem or heathen for baptism at the hour of death; and a third, the desire of a person who is under a master that will not allow him to receive the ordinance. The same distinction he also admitted in regard to the viaticum, or communion at death; it was necessary, but when it could not be had, the wish for it was equivalent. We replied, that in John 3: 5, not only being born of water, or baptism, but also being born of the Spirit, or internal regeneration, is declared to be necessary to admission into heaven; one of which we believe to be an external sign of the other, and not productive of it, nor necessarily accompanied by it; and then inquired if his church holds baptism to be regeneration, or acknowledges the necessity likewise of a change of heart. He confessed, in answer, that it knows of no other change than external baptism. I must add, from other authority, that, not only are the Armenians now entirely ignorant of that great change of moral character, regeneration, but they seem not to know of any special operations of the Spirit of God upon the heart, almost the only peculiar influences commonly ascribed to him, being those by which miracles are wrought. In fact, in their practical ideas of the economy of salvation, the third person of the Trinity seems hardly to have a place.—Questions respecting election and the kindred doctrines, which divide Calvinists and Arminians among us, have never been agitated in the Armenian church, nor do any opinions exist respecting them. Possibly something may have crept into its very oldest writers from St. Augustin and others; but almost, if not quite, all its theological works are entirely scholastic, and probably the Armenian lan-

guage does not contain a clear exhibition of the doctrines of grace, out of the Bible.

According to the rules of the Armenian church, I believe, baptism consists in plunging the whole body in water three times, as the sacred formula is repeated; but the present mode of administering it in Armenia, we were assured by more than one intelligent ecclesiastic, is by pouring upon the head of the child, sitting in the font, a handful of water in the name of the Father, another in the name of the Son, and a third in the name of the Holy Ghost, and then plunging the whole body three times, to signify that Christ was in the grave three days. That entire immersion, and the triple repetition, are not considered essential, however, is proved by the fact, that the baptism of even heretical sects who only sprinkle once, is considered valid, and persons thus baptized are not required, as among the Greeks, to submit to the ordinance again, on entering the Armenian church. We once inquired of a bishop, what is the effect of baptism, and were answered, with the greatest astonishment at our ignorance, that it takes away original sin. The doctrine, however, that all who die unbaptized are thrust immediately down to hell for Adam's sin, though firmly held by the Armenians, has not led them, as it has the papists, to allow in urgent cases of lay baptism. The ordinance can be performed by those only who have been admitted to priest's orders. Generally it is done, in imitation of the Jewish law of circumcision, on the eighth day, though dangerous illness sometimes hastens it, and when no priest is at hand it is postponed.

The Armenian church holds to the usual number of *seven sacraments*. Baptism, the communion, marriage, ordination, and penance have already been remarked upon, in this and preceding letters. The remaining two, *confirmation* and *extreme unction*, also came up in the course of our conversation with the vartabéds. The former is always perform-

ed at the same time as baptism; and consists in anointing with due ceremony the forehead, and the organs of the five senses, viz. the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and hands and feet, with the holy oil. In fact, the sacredness of that material so eclipses every other ceremony of the occasion, that, not only has *meirón* come to be the common name for confirmation, but in the estimation of the vulgar, at least, it is considered as acting a more efficacious part than even the water of baptism, in making the child an heir of heaven. It is always conferred by the parish priest who administers the baptism, and not, as in the English and Romish churches, by a bishop.—Extreme unction seems not to be universally practised by the Armenians. One bishop assured us that it is now entirely disused, and a gentleman of information told us, that he had searched for it in vain in the formularies of the church. Still, the vartabéds this morning, in agreement with some others of whom we inquired, contended that it is regularly administered *at baptism!* The reason assigned for so early an application of the last preparation for death, was, that the Armenians, being a scattered and oppressed people, liable often to die where a priest cannot be had, it is thought best to secure to every one at the commencement of life, what is so absolutely essential to the future happiness of the soul. Probably it is united in the ritual with confirmation, especially as both consist in anointing with *meirón*. Or rather, I suppose the Armenian church really has not this sacrament, and has only taken some part of the ceremony of confirmation, and called it extreme unction, in accommodation to papal ideas. It is never administered at the hour of death. You will now perceive, that, as the communion also is always given at baptism, four sacraments are then crowded at once upon an infant generally only eight days old; viz. baptism, confirmation, extreme unction, and communion!

The vartabéd Lucas, who from the beginning had shown

much less candor than Hovhannes, and had particularly objected to his liberal concession of the Christian name to such as deny the perpetual virginity of Mary, at length seemed determined upon dispute, and threw out as a bone of contention, an accusation against us of inconsistency, in admitting the crucifixion of Christ, and still not honoring the cross. We replied, that the death of Christ as an atonement for sin, is indeed the foundation and substance of all our preaching; but we consider that if it be believed with the heart, the external sign is a matter of perfect indifference. At this he only grew warmer, and began to assign reasons for its absolute necessity. Determined not to be drawn into a heated argument, we reminded him that we were not now disputing whether we or they are right, but only conversing for mutual information; and then, briefly explaining how the doctrine, that what Scripture enjoins must be done and what it does not enjoin is unessential, lies the foundation of all our theological views, we told him that we do not deem this ceremony necessary, because it is not ordered in the word of God. A word or two among themselves led them to conclude, that, as the Bible does indeed say nothing of the sign of the cross, we were beyond the reach of argument respecting it; and immediately the conversation assumed a more friendly turn.

We were happy to have an opportunity, in answer to several questions, to describe to them the simplicity of our own religious rites.—Lucas inquired if we say mass every Sabbath, or once a month, or only once a year. To meet the idea prevalent among them, that the performance of mass is the chief duty of a priest, we replied, that our clergy *preach* regularly once or twice every Sabbath; but that the elements of the eucharist are never consecrated, except when all who are qualified are expected to commune. Then, the form described in the Gospel is used: the minister first prays, breaks the bread, and distributes it; then

he prays again, and distributes the wine; and a hymn, sung by all, closes the ceremony. This occurs in some places, we informed them, every month, in others once in two months, and in others still, once in three months. He approved.—Hovhannes inquired if we have the sacrament of confession. In order to show them, that, though we are destitute of this, we have another effectual means of preventing unqualified persons from approaching the table of the Lord, we replied, that before admission for the first time to the communion, every candidate is examined as to his faith and practice by certain officers of the church, of whom the pastor is generally one. If they approve, he is proposed to the body of communicants; and, after sufficient time has elapsed for them to form an opinion of his character, he is admitted by vote, and ever afterward has a right to commune, without any subsequent examination. At the time of his admission, however, besides a public profession of his faith, he enters into a solemn covenant with the other communicants, and they also with him, in which is included an obligation to exercise a Christian watchfulness over the conduct of each other. So that each is watching over the other, and the pastor over all, and if any one be overtaken in a fault, and private admonitions fail to reclaim him, he is brought before the church, reprov'd, suspended from communion, or excommunicated, as they shall determine by vote. We have more than once found an account of the organization of our churches, though a thing never dreamed of before, make a very favorable impression upon Armenians to whom we have given it, and such seemed to be its effect upon the vartabéds. They only inquired, as we had said that none are ever admitted to the communion till they arrive at years of discretion, if baptism is postponed in the same way; and seemed satisfied at our reply, that it is generally administered the first time the mother is able to attend

church, and sometimes earlier if the child is in danger of dying.—They also inquired which way we direct our devotions. We replied, that, believing God to be present every where, as much in the west as in the east, we never think of the points of the compass when we are about to pray. The Armenians, however, they assured us, are always careful to face the east at the time of prayer; a thing which we often observed, especially in the position of their churches. Indeed, so well is that understood to be the point toward which they always pray, that we have more than once known our moslem muleteers, when at a loss for the direction of Mecca, inquire of the Armenians for their *kiblah*, and turning at right angles, begin their devotions.

Having been already informed, that the Armenians generally labor neither on Saturday nor on Sabbath evening, we inquired when, according to their church, the Sabbath commences. Their reply was, that, though the true day begins and ends at midnight, their canons forbid labor after sunset on Saturday evening, and after the same hour on Sunday evening leave every one to his own inclinations. The same rule applies to the great festivals, but the fasts are kept from midnight to midnight. They argued the correctness of their church, from the expression, ‘the evening and the morning,’ in the first chapter of Genesis; and from the declaration that Christ lay in the grave three days. For the Armenians, and, I believe, the Greeks also, never doubt that our Savior arose precisely at midnight, and of course the first day of the week cannot be included among the three that he was in the grave, unless it begins before that hour. Labor is now usually suspended on Saturday, from the termination of evening prayers, which is generally a little before sunset.

They assured us, in answer to our inquiries, that a time is believed by them to be coming, when the whole world

will embrace Christianity; and as a proof that it is at hand, they declared that the Persians, as a body, are now prepared for such a step, were they not afraid of their government. We suggested that the labors of Martyn had contributed to persuade some of that nation of the truth of Christianity, and reminded them of his visit to their convent. They barely said that they recollected his name, and went on to affirm, that the moslems are much more ready to unite with the Armenians, who are their neighbors and well known, than with any foreign missionaries. The German missionaries had been preaching, they said, so many years, and still had made no converts, while they had baptized, since the war, forty or fifty, who had come of their own accord to the convent, and solicited the rite. They acknowledged, however, that not very strict qualifications were demanded, as, instead of a belief or even knowledge of all the dogmas of their church, only an acknowledgement of the trinity, and of the divinity of Christ, was required of the candidates; the latter of which points they explained, when questioned by us if a belief in the atoning sacrifice of Christ was not deemed necessary, as embracing the whole character of the Savior.

The morning passed away in friendly conversation, during which many apologies were made that no more attention had been paid us on our arrival, and an invitation was given us to dine with them to-day. We accordingly sat down about twelve o'clock to a plentiful repast. Trout had formed a part of almost every meal we had eaten in the convent; and observing it also upon the table now, we inquired from whence they were obtained. They replied, that they were from the lake of Seván; and affirmed that that lake contains twelve kinds of fish, which succeed each other in regular rotation, month by month: this was the month for trout!—The visit to the library, our request for which in the morning had procured us this interview, was

not forgotten, and after dinner, we were conducted to it by Hovhannes. The books were crowded together without much order, and though numerous, they doubtless fall far short of his estimate, which was 16,000 volumes. Among them were many manuscripts; some bearing marks of considerable antiquity, and others yielding to none that I have ever seen, in any language, in beauty. He declared that the convent has now no school, and that its press is no longer in operation.

From the library, Hovhannes invited us to his own apartments, and in the course of a long conversation, communicated a variety of information, which I have given elsewhere. We became much interested in him. He was educated by the Catholicos, has been with him ever since his appointment to his present office, and is now his secretary. No other of the monks knows Russian, nor, I believe, any foreign language. He doubtless, according to the fashion of the country, expressed more friendship than he felt, but many circumstances convinced us, that he really possessed more candor and sense, than is usually found under the cowl of a monk. He visited us in the evening, to request that we would ask him then for any additional information we might desire, as he should be engaged in the synod to-morrow. When speaking of missions in the morning, he had lamented that divisions had hitherto weakened the church, and prevented the conversion of the world; and now he voluntarily expressed great pleasure, that the different sects are becoming more friendly to each other, and that the religious wars which disgrace the history of former ages, are heard of no more, and would, in fact, in the present state of the world, be impossible. 'It is time' said he, 'that those who agree in the doctrines of the trinity, the divinity of Christ, and the atonement, (we feared the latter was suggested only by our repeated mention of it in the morning,) should no longer

be divided by such minor points as fasting and the like.' —A tray of beautiful apples, pears, grapes and melons from Hosep vartabéd, in the evening, gave additional evidence of a desire to make up for the coldness of our first reception.

After a cup of tea with the vartabéds, we left Echmiádzin on the morning of the 23d of November. Before reaching Eriván, I had another attack of the ague and fever, which was repeated for two or three days succeeding. But with no other remedy than riding, it passed away, and we reached Nakhcheván again on the 29th of the same month.

LETTER XVII.

FROM NAKHCHEVAN TO TEBRIZ.

Leave Nakhcheván—Cross the Aras—Benighted in the open air—Perykend—Khoy—Delayed by sickness—Conveyed in a takhtirewán to Tebriz—Kindness of English friends—Description of Tebriz—Its trade—The prince royal, Abbas Mirza—His government.

DEAR SIR,

WE left Nakhcheván for Tebriz in Persia, on the 3d of December. The shortest and most usual route is by Esgy Joolfah on the Aras, and Merénd, an ancient Armenian city now the capital of a district of the province of Aderbaján. But hearing that the plague existed at Merénd, we avoided that route, and took the road to Khoy. The general, prince Bebutoff, had politely ordered the police at Nakhcheván, by letter, to furnish us with a guide, and we were detained until 10 A. M. before he was ready. Starting at that hour, we descended immediately into the alluvial, which lies between the town and the river. It was little cultivated, and the villages upon it were few. After a ride of two fúrsakhs, we reached the Aras at half past 12 o'clock, near Abbas-abád, a fortress named after its founder, the present prince royal of Persia. Its mud walls and deep fosse, constructed upon the modern principles of fortification, would give it an appearance of strength; had it a more favorable location than the mere level plain. We were not allowed to enter it, and passed on to the ferry at the quarantine ground, perhaps a half a mile below. Here was no lazaretto, and only two or three rooms underground, and a miserable tent or two, accommodated a com-

pany of half starved travellers, who were doomed to a quarantine of ten or fourteen days. Karmir-vank (the red convent,) a monastery of some distinction in the ancient canton of Koghten,* appeared not far below. It was now the residence of the bishop of Aderbaiján, whom we had met at Nakhcheván on our first visit.

Our passports had to be examined by the commandant of the fortress, before we could cross the river, and were accordingly sent by the hands of a soldier. He returned with the report, that a general being there, the commandant was too much occupied to attend to them. Thus, though there was but just time to reach the nearest village on the opposite side before dark, we were detained three or four hours. We had laid in, too, but a small stock of provisions in bread and cheese, and the poor people here being unable to spare us a morsel, we had the prospect of a hungry as well as a houseless night. At length the general was seen approaching. It was general R. whose kindness in previous embarrassments we have already had occasion more than once to acknowledge. He expressed much surprise at finding us so often detained, and instantly despatched one of his suite, to see that we had our passports immediately. They soon came, but the ferry was so extremely awkward, that before all our company and baggage reached the Persian bank of the Aras, and were ready to proceed, the sun was near setting. Where we landed, about a thousand bushels of barley in bags were lying unguarded upon the ground. It belonged to the prince, Abbas Mirza, who had sent it hither to be passed over the river for a market. The Russian authorities ordered it to undergo a long quarantine before being admitted, and directed him to send men to take care of it. Provoked by such a regulation, he caused it to be thrown upon the ground, and there it had lain for three months when we passed, entirely

* St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 134.

exposed to the weather, and to the depredations of birds, beasts and men. Our muleteers failed not to allow their horses, to take their share. We pushed on with the hope of finding some village before many hours; but just as the last ray of twilight left the horizon, we lost the path, and were consequently obliged to spread our carpets in the open air for the night. The dry gravelly lands, which occupy the space between the Aras and the mountains on this side, afford no wood for a fire; nor would our muleteers, indeed, allow one to be built even of weeds, for fear of attracting robbers; a caution which showed us that we had now left the safety produced by Russian police. We had left its embarrassments and hindrances, too; for the Persian territory opens its arms to every traveller, neither asking him whence he comes nor whither he goes.

Dec. 4. The night proved calm and mild for December in the latitude of 39° . We were up at 2, and started at half past 3. A. M. Our Persian muleteers had begun, almost from the moment of crossing the Aras, to spit, and throw their curses at the country upon the other side; and now, just before sunrise, they stopped the whole party to say their prayers, apparently as an expression of their satisfaction at finding themselves once more out of the polluted territories of the hated Russians. We had, before that hour, left the valley of the Aras. Beyond, our path led, with little perceptible ascent or descent, through defiles between naked hills, exhibiting hardly a sign of cultivation. High mountains around were covered with snow, the weather became raw and windy, and we had no food the whole day to brace us against the cold, and give us strength to ride, but the remnants of our bread and cheese, which we had taken yesterday morning from Nakhcheván for a lunch. Thus we rode twelve hours continuously.

About 11 A. M. we crossed a fine stream of water, flowing to the left toward the Aras, from a plain on the right,

which seemed extremely fertile and contained a number of villages. A draught from the river was the only refreshment we found here. A ridge of white and gray marble succeeded, and we entered another much larger plain, and so marshy that it was now partly covered with water. Here we reached a moslem village, called Pery-kend, at half past 3 P. M. and sought for lodgings. It was filled with Kürds, whom the snow had driven from the neighboring mountains to seek here for winter-quarters; and for that reason, its inhabitants pretended, no good accommodations could be furnished us. We had not yet learned how to manage the inhospitality, which the Persians have been taught by their government and their religion to practise toward foreigners, nor indeed were we acquainted with its nature; and, being too fatigued to proceed farther, we accepted a dark corner in a stable, filled with horses, cows and asses, and almost suffocating us by its stench. I was myself, in fact, reduced to such weakness by sleeping out in the night, by the chilliness of the weather, and so long a ride upon an empty stomach, in addition to my previously enfeebled health, that even a resting place among the cattle was acceptable.

Dec. 5. We spent a miserable Sabbath at Pery-kend. A cold rain storm, and my diseased health confined me to our stable.

Dec. 6. Our morning's ride to Khoy was three fúr-sakhs. When next able to take notes, I could recollect very few circumstances respecting it; and in fact a thick mist enveloping every object, limited very much the observations of us both. Almost the whole distance was a plain, and at one place a copious spring of warm salt water boiled up in a small pond by the side of the path. As we approached the city, the fertility of the soil increased, cultivation became general, and villages were frequent. We viewed the plain of Khoy under more advantageous circumstances, on

our return from Tebriz. The whole basin, inclosed by the surrounding mountains, is of great extent. Much of it is broken up by hills of a dry soil, and not remarkable for fertility; though they, as well as the mountains, are destitute of the sunburnt and arid aspect of the scenery of Tebriz and of the valley of the Aras, and afford, upon their sloping sides and swelling summits, verdant pastures for flocks and herds. In the vicinity of the city, the plain is extremely level, and watered almost to excess; and its fame for fertility has not exceeded the reality. Besides numerous gardens which beautify it, grain and cotton are extensively cultivated.

We had hardly dismounted at Khoy, before it was told us that an English lady had just arrived from Tebriz, and taken lodgings in the same caravanserai! Wishing to know if the plague was still at that city, as reported, we informed her by a messenger, who we were, and proposed to call. She replied, that her accommodations were too miserable to allow her to receive a visit without embarrassment, and that she preferred calling on us. We had neither chair, nor stool, nor anything to sit upon, but our carpets spread upon the floor. We bethought ourselves of the frame of our tandoor, and covering it with a cloak, offered her a seat upon that. She proved to be French, instead of English, and was the person whom other travellers have mentioned as engaged in instructing the daughters of the prince. She has been in the country many years, sometimes travelling in the dress of a man, which doubtless well became her.

Dec. 7. We spent the day at Khoy, and were almost confined, by the cold and dampness of the weather and my feeble health, to the caravanserai. In our subsequent visit we had a better opportunity to see the city. In former times, it belonged to the Armenian province of Vasbooragán; now it is one of the cities of Aderbaiján.

Though its walls, as well as its houses, are of mud or unburnt bricks, broad and regular streets, intersected by canals with shade trees upon their banks, give it an airiness and regularity unknown in almost every other oriental city I have seen. It has a lofty and well built bazár, too, that would hardly disgrace Constantinople. The extreme moisture of the plain, upon the level surface of which it is situated, combined with the warmth of the atmosphere in the summer months, must subject its inhabitants to frequent fevers. A son of the prince royal, named Jihangir Mirza, now resides here, and governs for his father the district of which it is the capital. Its moslem population we heard estimated at from 4000 to 7000 families. A distinct suburb contains about 100 families of Armenians, who have two churches and two priests. In the villages around are a few more, but nearly all have emigrated north of the Aras.

Dec. 8. A tolerably well made and perfectly straight road conducted us from Khoy, for about two miles in the direction of Tebriz, to the principal river that waters the plain. A double ditch of running water lines each side, and waters rows of the *sinjid*, or silver-leaved willow, which form an avenue the whole distance. The *sinjid* is a common tree in all the plains of Aderbaján which we visited, and being invariably planted along the margin of canals, never failed to remind us forcibly of the imagery of the first Psalm. It produces an insipid fruit, resembling the date in form, which abounds in every bazár. About half way from the city to the river, a side avenue conducts from the road to the country-seat of a khan, in an extensive and luxuriant garden of fruit trees upon the side of a hill; which carried our minds away to other countries, where protecting governments allow private wealth thus publicly to exhibit itself, more frequently than in Persia. The river is crossed by an arched bridge of stone.

Of these ornaments to the suburbs of Khoy, however, I noticed nothing this morning; for fog, and rain, and the suffering of disease prevented all observation. A return of fever at Khoy had increased my debility, and now my strength soon failed. Pain in my back made the motion of my horse intolerable, and I dismounted to walk. Thus I could proceed but a few rods, and that only by the aid of my companion's arm, before weakness forced me to my horse again. By alternately riding and walking, however, I succeeded with the greatest difficulty, in reaching Haji Seid, 3 fursakhs from Khoy. It was a moslem village, at the entrance of a pass in the mountains, which conducts to the lake of Oormiah. A corner of a miserable stable was the first lodging-place that offered, and the best that the villagers could be persuaded to give us. Dirty as it was, I was never so glad to reach the best American inn; nor did ever a fire seem more cheerful than the burning cow-dung which was blazing here when we entered. I remember no more, for a stupor, which had been gradually increasing during the morning's ride, now completely overcame me. I sunk upon the ground, and remained unconscious of what passed for two days. My companion could not obtain from me an answer to the simplest questions, nor had I the strength to turn in bed, if that name may be given to what was under me. It was a cloak and a carpet laid upon the ground, and made, at length, somewhat softer by the addition of some coarse weeds, procured with difficulty from our moslem host. The stench of the cattle, which filled our stable at night, polluted the air, and the lowing of calves disturbed us. No motives my companion could use were sufficient to procure another room, or even to cause the cattle to be removed from this. And such was the dread of ceremonial pollution from Christian contact, that the slightest conveniences and attentions were denied us, or given with the greatest reluctance. Our

food even had to be cooked in our own dishes, by our own servant.

On awaking from my stupor, I could neither walk nor stand alone ; but was free from fever, and my first thought was to inquire how we should escape from such a miserable spot. Mr. Dwight had anticipated me, and already sent a messenger to the English gentlemen at Tebriz for whom we had letters, to inform them of our condition, and request the aid of a *takhtirewán* to convey me to town. I hope never to forget the kindness of Dr. Mc Neill, the physician and first assistant of the embassy, upon that occasion. In a very short time after intelligence of my illness reached him, he entered our stable, though the distance was at least seventy or eighty miles. The *takhtirewán* also soon arrived, as near as the mountainous road would allow it, and on the 15th, seven days after we reached the village, he made arrangements to remove me. The mountains which separate the plain of Khoy from the lake of Oormiah, are at this point about two *fúrsakhs* broad, and composed chiefly of naked sandstone rocks, giving place now and then to small fields of grain. Our progress over them was slow, and somewhat difficult, owing to the peculiar construction of my carriage. A *takhtirewán* resembles a sedan chair, except that it is carried by two mules or horses, instead of men, requires a person to assume a lying instead of a sitting posture, and is completely closed from the external air. It is the only native carriage known to the Persians. Had a projecting rock, or a stumble of a horse disturbed its balance, I must have been overturned, and perhaps precipitated to a great distance. A kind Providence preserved me from all accidents. As we descended the farther side, the windows were opened a moment to afford me a view of the lake of Oormiah: I had no other prospect of the country during the remainder

of our ride to Tebriz. I might give you in this connection, the observations of Mr. Dwight; but I prefer to postpone them till another occasion, when we both inspected the same ground again. Especially as this, being the point where we passed beyond the boundaries of ancient Armenia, is a convenient spot for breaking the narrative. Dr. Mc Neill passed on before, leaving orders with the heads of the different villages to accommodate us comfortably; and we reached Tebriz in safety on the 18th of December.

The English embassy to the court of Persia, in order to be near the prince royal, into whose hands the Shah has resigned the management of his foreign relations, has its seat at Tebriz. Mr. Cartwright, the English consul general at Constantinople, had kindly recommended us by letter to Col. Mc Donald the late ambassador, well known as a traveller under the name of Kinneir, and to Maj. Willock, former commander of the English forces in Persia. The latter being in the country during the winter, hospitably opened his house in town for our residence. To find, after lodging so long in filthy stables, and being reduced to the extremity of weakness by disease, comfortable and well-furnished apartments ready for our reception the moment we arrived, was more grateful than can be conceived, and doubtless contributed much to the restoration of my health. For many other attentions, Maj. Willock, and his brother Sir H. Willock, former chargé d'affairs, deserve our sincerest acknowledgments. Col. Mc Donald had been taken from the world before we arrived; but Capt. Campbell, then acting envoy, treated us with a hospitality, that could hardly have been exceeded had we been his own brothers. He also readily facilitated our proceedings in every thing that depended upon his official capacity; and, what we esteemed not the least of his attentions, he opened his house for religious services on the Sabbath, and took pains to procure a full attendance. Our meetings usually consisted of nearly

twenty who spoke our language, and are among our most satisfactory recollections of our visit to Persia. While Dr. Mc Neill remained at Tebriz, he not only contributed to the restoration of my health by his medical advice, but by his superior intelligence added much to our information of the country. Diplomatic business at length called him to Teherán; and he was subsequently appointed Resident at Bushire, one of the highest offices in the gift of the Presidency of Bombay. After his departure, Dr. Cormick kindly took charge of my health. He is the same physician who healed Martyn of a similar disease, when he was at this city; and he seemed to have retained the highest opinion of him, as a Christian, a companion, and a scholar. His long experience in the diseases of the climate was of great utility to me. Among the gentlemen whose civilities we experienced at Tebriz, was Mr. Nisbet, an officer in the commissariat department, who together with his wife entered into our feelings as missionaries, and sympathised with us in our views of the spiritual wants of the natives of the country. In a word, though I have invariably received the readiest aid and attention from English gentlemen, whom I have met in travelling, none have equalled our friends at Tebriz in hospitality and kindness.

Tebriz is the capital of Aderbaiján, (called also Azerbaidján,) the ancient Media Atopatené, and now one of the most populous and productive of all the provinces of Persia. It stands at the head of a plain, which extends about thirty miles eastward from the lake of Oormiah. Arid mountains, without a tree or a particle of vegetation of any kind, and composed of ledges of rocks or gravelly earth, surround it on the east, and extend off on either side of the plain toward the west. Though externally the very picture of barrenness, they are said to be rich in mineral substances; and green, bright red, and various other unusual shades, intermingled with brown, their prevailing color, convince even

the distant observer of the presence of some unusual ingredients. In iron, copper and salt, they are known to abound. A mine of the latter is wrought not far from the city, and the river which descends from the mountains on the east and flows through the whole length of the plain, is strongly impregnated with it. Armenian history pretends that Tebriz, which it usually calls the royal *Kantság*, was founded in A. D. 246 by Khósrov First, and named *Ta-vrej*, "this revenge," in memory of the vengeance he took upon Ardasheer the first Sassanian, in driving him from Persia.* The Persian geographers assert that it was built by a wife or a general of Haroon el Rasheed, and named *Teb-riz*, "the fever scattered," from its salubrity.† While Strabo contradicts both, by mentioning in his day *Gaza*, (evidently the same as the *Gazakon* of the Byzantines, and the *Kantság* of the Armenians,) as the royal city of Atropatia. In successive ages it has occasionally fallen for a time into the hands of the kings of Armenia, the emperors of Constantinople, and the Osmanly Sultáns; but generally it has belonged to the rulers of Persia. Though repeatedly overturned by earthquakes, and destroyed by wars, it has as often resumed a rank of the first importance. In the time of the Moghúl Hoolakoo, Marágha indeed eclipsed it, but generally it has been the capital of the surrounding region.

It contains at present, according to the estimate of the English residents, about 60,000 inhabitants. Extensive and populous suburbs around, seem almost to form a part of it, as they probably in fact once did. Among them are many and luxuriant gardens of fruit trees, in which the apple, peach, pear, quince, apricot, almond, and grape abound, and contribute to the abundance and variety of its first bazárs. Numerous canals run in every direction to irrigate them, and pass the roads by descending in tunnels, so as to

* Chamcheán, P. 3: c. 12.

† Chardin, vol. 2: p. 333.

leave the level unbroken by the unevenness of bridges. The city itself is surrounded by a wall of brick and a fosse, which present some appearance of strength. Its houses are a mockery of every idea of oriental magnificence. In the style, to which we have found no exceptions since entering the valley of the Aras, they are of mud; built either by throwing a handful of that material in a damp state irregularly upon another, or by first drying it in the form of bricks, and then arranging it in regular layers. The streets, except where the English have made a few sidewalks, as causeys through the mud to each other's houses, are unpaved. Not a window opens toward them, nor is hardly a house to be seen. As you pass along, nothing appears but naked mud walls, broken now and then by an irregular opening with a clumsy door. In some cases a doorway of burnt bricks indicates some attempt at display; while frequently in the gardens of the suburbs, security is more especially consulted by making the door of one entire stone. Enter, and you find an open yard, used either for a garden, or a barn-yard, according to the taste of the owner. The house is almost invariably of one story, in order that no one, either from his window or his terrace, may pry into the secrets of his neighbor's harem; and generally presents a model of the most perfect irregularity. Room is added to room successively, as an increase of wives, of children, of servants, or of horses makes it necessary to build greater, and all are scattered separately in different corners of the yard, or thrown carelessly together so as to inclose court with court, according as convenience or chance may direct.

Aside from the *Ark*, an enormous ruined tower or castle within the citadel, and the splendid and even magnificent remains of an old mosk just without the Teherán gate, the city contains no public buildings, ancient or modern, that can compensate at all for the meanness of its private dwell-

ing houses. Many of its mosks cover a sufficient extent of ground, but they exhibit to the spectator without, hardly a single feature of beauty. Even the minaret, that abundant and sometimes beautiful ornament of a Turkish city, is wanting. We saw but one in Tebriz, and that was broken; in the towns of the sheeies generally, minarets are extremely rare. The caravanserais are numerous and large, and the bazárs extensive; but there is nothing in the architecture of any to attract attention, except that the new bazár is spacious and covered with lofty domes and arches. The inhabitants of Tebriz, indeed, exhibit peculiar skill in the construction of the dome and arch. No frames to support, or forms to shape them are used. The architect guided merely by the eye, and sticking the bricks upon each other as fast as they can be handled, with nothing to uphold them but a cement which assumes almost immediately the consistency of stone, gives them a turn of perfect regularity. Whatever may once have been the reputation of Tebriz for scattering fevers, it has it no longer. Its winters are not very unlike those of our middle States, and frosts and snows are frequent; but its summers are said to be extremely sultry, and it has been observed that most English residents have at first to undergo the seasoning of an intermitent. The earthquakes which have repeatedly overturned it, are still so frequent, that some of the best houses have apartments built entirely of wood, for a refuge from their convulsions. One occurred while we were there, which prostrated a wall of some length.

The causes that have ranked Tebriz among the places, which have been proved by a succession of ages to be convenient, under almost every combination of circumstances, for the location of important cities, are numerous. Among them doubtless is the fact, that it is in the heart of a large and fruitful region. But the principal is, that in it naturally centres an extensive trade. Its bazárs are very exten-

sive, and constantly so thronged that one can with difficulty work his way through them. Yet with the exception of a few silk goods wrought from materials raised in Mazanderán, it is the seat of no important manufacture; and even they are all the work of domestic looms. Nor do its shops generally exhibit any thing but the productions of common mechanics, and merchandise of inferior value. Enter the magazines of its caravanserais, however, and you will find them stored with the riches of India and the skill of Europe. It is as a thoroughfare of commerce that Tebriz is distinguished. At nearly equal distances from the Indus, the Persian gulf, Constantinople, and the marts of Russia, it has commercial relations with all. Merchandise to the amount of 600,000 tománs, (about \$1,800,000,) passes from it annually over the Caspian sea to Astrakhán. The costly goods of Kashmeer and the East are brought by its merchants from the region of the Indus, and exchanged in the bazárs of Constantinople for the manufactures of Europe. While some of the productions sent to India by the British East India Company for the Persian market, find their way hither from the ports of the Persian gulf; and the productions of Arabia are brought from Bagdád.

The whole of this trade is in the hands of natives. Not a European mercantile house exists at Tebriz, nor has England, after all her splendid embassies, to this moment any commercial treaty with Persia. The nearest attempt at direct commerce with the country, which she has recently made, is the appointment of a consul at Trebizond, with liberty to trade. He has already an agent at Erzroom, and contemplates the establishment of a branch at Tebriz. Should it prove an advantageous channel for introducing English manufactures, probably they will pursue it in preference to the circuitous one now taken. Distance is in favor of it, for the Tebriz market at least; for, while from Bushire there

is a land carriage of 1200 miles at an expense of from ten to thirteen tománs the load; Trebizond is only about half as far, and the carriage from thence but half as dear.

The unsettled nature of the Persian government, however, threatens still, as it has done for ages, to deter foreign merchants from risking large depots of merchandise in the country; and the disposition, now so strongly manifested by the native traders, to import their own goods from extensive foreign markets affording the chance of an advantageous selection from large assortments, will render the success of any foreign establishment, which may attempt to bring merchandise to them, at least doubtful. At any rate, a mercantile firm that shall extend its branches no farther east than Trebizond or Erzroom, can expect to do nothing in the Persian trade. For the merchants of that country will never stop at a small magazine in either of those places, so long as a little more time, which they know not how to value, and the distance of a few hundred miles, which it costs them almost nothing to travel, will bring them to the extensive depots of Constantinople, which have so long furnished them with goods to the amount of many hundred thousand tománs annually.

The principal circumstance that has attracted the attention of Europeans toward Tebriz, is its having been for many years the residence of Abbas Mirza, the prince royal of Persia. Such flattering accounts were given by travellers of his talents and liberality, when he first entered upon the duties of public life, that the world expected from him important reforms to improve the political, if not the religious condition of his countrymen. He was marching with his army to a distant part of the empire during our visit, and we had no opportunity to see him. The accounts we heard of him, however, disappointed us much. In regard to many European innovations, indeed, he excels his countrymen in that freedom from prejudice, by which many of them are

distinguished from the Turks. His religious views, too, are liberal, and his practice tolerant. But with his liberality, he is also immoral, indulging in drinking and other species of dissipation. So long as he had an able prime minister, his defects, as a ruler, were less apparent. But now, not only does he show himself possessed of the most perfect duplicity, but of a weakness which places him under the control of an unprincipled man, who has only to intoxicate him, to carry the most unwelcome point.

With the characteristic avarice of his family, he makes the heaviest exactions from his province that can be borne, and adopts arbitrary and objectionable modes of collecting them. We met at Tebriz Jaafer Kooly khan, a chief of the powerful tribe of Afshárs, and one of the first of the Persian nobility, who had been deposed from the office of governor of Marágha, which he had long held, merely because another had offered a larger tribute than he was paying or would pay. In other instances also has he virtually sold similar stations to the highest bidder. The officers under him are not restrained from flagrant abuses. It was reported, at the time of our visit, that the governor of Tebriz had leagued with the principal thieves in town for a share of their booty. Justice is known to be perfectly venial. A gentleman informed us that he once, for an experiment, brought a cause before the chief judge. For his gratification or to pay him for his trouble, in compliance with the customs of the country, a small present was given; but the opposite party offered higher, and the gentleman's claims were negatived. In a word, moral principle, political uprightness, and the rights of the subject, are subjected to the dictates of sensuality, ambition and avarice. And none, permit me to add, but those whom skepticism leads to forget the benefits that Christianity confers upon man, ought ever to have expected any other result,

under the influence of the false and corrupt religion of Mecca.

The prince has indeed long succeeded in preserving the public peace in his province. Open robbery; with occasional exceptions on the borders of the Kùrdish mountains, is unknown; and the persons and property of foreigners are perfectly safe. But it is an interesting question, whether the death of the Shah may not, any day, break up all the foundations of public order and security. The order of succession has hitherto been so perfectly unsettled in Persia, that at the death of a Shah, whoever is strong enough hesitates not to aspire to the throne; and upon such occasions, rival parties have often imbrued their hands in each other's blood, and brought upon the nation all the evils of complete anarchy. In the present instance, the size of the royal family makes the number of candidates unusually large. Abbas has the advantage of all the others, in having been nominated to the succession by his father, secured in it, as is understood, by a treaty with Russia, and entrusted for a long time with the organization of the whole regular army of the realm. But an army is of little use, when want of punctuality in payment estranges its affections from its leader, as is said to be the case with his. The Russians would perhaps not hinder an insurrection, that might give them occasion to interfere, and pick some of the richest jewels from the crown they disposed of. And as to the father's wishes, few of his sons, probably, will regard them, after death shall have stripped him of his power.

LETTER XVIII.

TEBRIZ.

Number and political condition of the Armenians of Tebriz—Their moral character—Their education—Festival of the Purification—Bishop Israel—His preaching—Conversation with him—Armenian way of salvation—Moslems of Aderbaiján not of the Persian race—Persian civility, and falsehood—Slight prejudices against European customs, with high ideas of ceremonial purity—Fondness for religious discussion, with bigotry or skepticism.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE already informed you, upon the authority of the ex-bishop of Aderbaiján, that, at the close of the late war, 9000 Armenian families emigrated from this province to the Russian territories. He also assured us, that there remained behind 2500 families, and that 50 or 60 families of the emigrants had returned; and I am inclined to credit him, rather than the present bishop at Tebriz, who declared that there are now not a thousand Armenian families in the province. The number of families of that nation in the city itself, is not greater than 60 or 70. They have a church, which is served by four priests.

The political condition of the Armenians of Tebriz is peculiar. When the prince found so many of their nation inclined, at the close of the war, to avail themselves of the protection of Russian laws by emigration, he promised all who would remain, the privilege of an English governor. Maj. Hart, who then commanded the English forces here, was consequently appointed to that office; and was clothed, for their government and protection, with very extensive

powers, which the prince has always held inviolable. Upon the decease of that gentleman, in 1830, Dr. Cormick was prevailed upon, by the solicitations of the people, I believe, as well as by the request of the prince, to accept the appointment. He held it while we were there, and however much he was troubled by the bad conduct of the Armenians, he never complained of want of countenance from the prince, in protecting them from moslem oppression and abuse. His authority did not extend beyond the city. So well convinced, indeed, is the prince of the value of his Armenian subjects, that, besides this important privilege, he also takes pains to keep their priests in his interest. That he gives them a regular salary, we were assured is not true; but they occasionally receive from him suits of clothing, and other valuable presents.

Of the moral character of the Armenians of Tebriz, we received the worst impression. Their priests are unprincipled hirelings, and besides other irregularities are given to much wine. The people are accused of the basest ingratitude. The English, out of regard to their professing the same religion, have always done much to protect them, but have received no thanks. Particularly did they, when the Russians were marching upon Tebriz, take many into their families as servants, merely to defend their lives from the rage of the moslems, who suspected them of acting as spies. Letters from these same persons were afterward intercepted, declaring to the Russians that they would have helped them to enter the city much sooner, had not the English prevented their giving the proper information. One day, we were informed, the *kaim-makám*, (lieutenant of the prince) warned the ambassador to caution the English to keep all their servants within doors, as every other Armenian was to be slain that night. Not only was the caution given, but English sergeants were stationed as sentinels at all the avenues to the Armenian quarter, to prevent the

massacre, and the next day a promise was obtained from the kaim-makám that they should not be touched. And yet they conducted themselves, after the entrance of the Russians, in such a manner, that to avoid their insolence was one reason why the English left the city. Without having a doubt that the Armenians are capable of all the ingratitude implied in this statement, it is a question whether the fact, that the English could not but be regarded as aiming expressly to uphold the power of their oppressors, which the Russians were endeavoring to humble, might not naturally make them its victims. In dishonesty they are even below the moslems. For want of a better Armenian servant, we were forced to engage one who was known to have stolen his master's carpets when the Russians entered Tebriz, and who, according to his own confession, had regularly overcharged his market bills to the amount of four or five tománs, (about \$12 or \$15,) a month. His former employer assured us, that he could give no better character to five or six other Armenians who had served him; and the oldest English resident in the place thought that, considering the habits of his countrymen, we ought not for such conduct to reject him.

Faithfulness to the charge imposed upon me demands a word upon another point of moral character, which I would willingly leave concealed in the dark parts of the earth, where it is so grossly developed. Concubinage may be practised in other countries, by such as are cast out of the pale of all decent society, without implicating the moral healthiness of public sentiment. But here it exists under circumstances, which plainly show the mass of the Armenian community to be infected with its corrupting influence. Public opinion does not frown upon it. Parents even sell their daughters into concubinage; and not only, we were assured, are these victims of lust admitted to the communion and the other privileges of the church, as good Christians, but

their priests have been found to share in the gain. This sad state of morals does not exist among the Armenians of Tebriz alone. In Erzroom, Eriván, and Nakhcheván, Armenian parents have been known to sell their daughters, for the same criminal purpose, for a limited time. The opinion was expressed to us by a Christian observer, that polygamy even, though not common, exists among the Armenians. He believed, though he knew of no instance, that priests might be induced by money to marry a man a second time, knowing that he had already one wife; and that the connivance of the bishops might be secured by the same means.

We had been informed at Nakhcheván, by the former bishop, that the Armenians, before their emigration, had nothing in the whole province of Aderbajján deserving the name of school; only a few children being here and there taught to read. The same statement was confirmed at Tebriz, in reference to their present condition; with the additional fact, that not only are the common people extremely ignorant, but many even of their leaders have not the knowledge of letters. In Tebriz, Mr. Nisbet had recently made a benevolent effort to procure the establishment of a school. Promises were obtained of a house for the teacher and school, of thirty or forty scholars at from half a tomán to two tománs per annum, and occasional presents of grain and the like. Fifty or sixty tománs, nearly enough for the teacher's salary, were thus pledged, and Mr. Nisbet engaged to aid in supplying the deficiency. He applied to the missionaries at Shoosha for a teacher, and no prejudices were manifested against receiving one from that quarter. There seemed to be even a willingness to concede, that the Scriptures alone should be made the standard of the religious instructions to be given. But just as the necessary documents were about to be signed, the cholera broke out, and diminished and scattered the in-

habitants, and the project had not been resumed. We applied to their present English governor to know how he would regard a missionary school for the Armenians, and were gratified to receive a full expression, not only of his own opinion of its desirableness and prospect of utility, but also of his decided belief, that no prejudices against it would be felt by either laity or clergy.

On the 25th of February, (13th of Feb. old style,) being informed that an important ceremony was to be performed in the church, we attended at the hour of evening prayer. In the yard before the main door, a concourse of people stood around a quadrangular space, in the centre of which was a pile of dry brushwood. A priest read service upon the door-step, while a man by his side enforced silence upon a parcel of boys, by an occasional box on the ear. Opposite these officiators sat a bishop in state, with a vartabéd or two by his side. A plate for contributions, filled with wax tapers, was circulated among the crowd, and each one as he put in his money took out a taper, which was soon lighted. The bishop, supported by two vartabédés and a number of priests, repeated a prayer on the four sides of the brushwood; then, after a word of exhortation, the by-standers, especially the boys, pitching over each other, plunged their tapers into it, and it was soon in a blaze. While prayers were still chanted over it, some relighted their tapers at the risk of being scorched, others scattered about the burning brands, one leaped through the blaze, and all seemed in the highest glee. It was the eve of the Purification of the Virgin; and with such profane mockeries do the Armenians generally introduce that festival. In some places the fire is built within the church.

You will perceive, that, as the virgin, according to the laws of Moses, must have presented herself for purification forty days after the birth of her son, the Armenians do not agree with either the Latins or Greeks, in the time of cel-

celebrating the nativity of our Savior. They have in fact retained the custom, which anciently prevailed extensively in the east, of observing Christmas on the 6th of January.* The baptism of Christ is also celebrated on the same day, and in token of it a cross, to which they conceive the Savior to be inseparably united by its consecration, is plunged in water previously blessed, with much pomp and ceremony. In regard to most of the great festivals, not connected with Christmas, the Armenian calendar agrees with the Greek.

The bishop who officiated on this occasion, we met several times during our delay at Tebriz. His name was Israel. He was formerly bishop of Albagh, a small district in the Kürdish mountains between Salmás and Joolamérk, which, under the name of Aghpag, was formerly a canton in the Armenian province of Gorjaik. The convent which he occupied bears the name of the apostle Bartholomew, who, if we may believe Armenian tradition, was martyred on the spot where it stands.† He was offended at the efforts of the Russians to induce the Armenians to emigrate, and seems to have obtained the deserted bishopric of Aderbaiján as his reward; for he assured us that he was now sole bishop of the whole province. Though his manners partook of Kürdish roughness, we were glad to learn that he maintains a good private character, and is not opposed to the improvement of his people. Vivian's *Three Dialogues*, lately printed at Moscow for the German mis-

* A Syrian writer quoted by Asseman says, that in the eastern and northern provinces, the nativity of Christ, as well as his baptism and the Epiphany, was celebrated on the 6th of January until the time of Arcadius. And another says that the former festival was transferred to the 25th of December, in accommodation to a heathen festival, which was celebrated on that day, and which many of the Christians were invited and inclined to attend. *Bib. Orient.* vol. 2: p. 164.

† *St. Mart.* vol. 1: p. 177.

sionaries, was circulated among his flock while we were here, with his approbation; and his treatment of us was always friendly, and destitute of any sign of jealousy. We found few ecclesiastics better acquainted with the doctrines and ceremonies of the church, and his readiness to communicate furnished us with considerable accurate information. There was a tinge of Romanism about it, however, which made us suspect that he had sat at the feet of some papal emissary. Though exact in his knowledge of canonical doctrines and ceremonies, his ignorance of every evangelical idea seemed complete; and he exhibited, with unusual candor, that pharisaical state of mind, which the religion of the oriental and papal churches tends so strongly to create.

He had, at a previous interview, invited us to attend mass at his church, and we accordingly went the next morning after the ceremony just described. Observing us soon after we entered, he invited us to a position next himself, by the platform in front of the altar designed for the officiators at morning and evening prayers. He is distinguished among his brethren for preaching, and, either in compliance with his own disposition, or to gratify us, who had had one or two conversations with him on this important duty of the clergy, he gave us a sermon this morning between prayers and the mass. In the absence of a pulpit, a chair was placed for him in front of the altar, and a rich carpet spread before it. Chairs were also offered to us, but we declined them, and took our seat among the audience on the floor. His subject was the proper observance of the fasts; and his thoughts were probably unpremeditated, and of little value. But his manner was striking. He commenced sitting, and that seemed the posture which he chose to maintain, but the animation of delivery frequently called him upon his feet, and urged him forward to the edge of his carpet, with a fine effect. No tone marred his enunciation, nor any stiffness his gestures. It was nature that spoke and

acted; and nature indeed in too undisguised a form except for these regions. Violent actions; varied, often high keyed and passionate tones; and significant contortions of the countenance, expressed his sentiments more clearly than the words he uttered, and would have astounded a more polite audience, as the ravings of madness. But here, where every man is accustomed from infancy to be kicked and flogged into his duty, all was in place, and was needed. He took occasion in his remarks to reprove the boys who had sported with the bonfire yesterday, by accusing them of bringing upon their church the ridicule of the foreigners who were present; and, as if unable otherwise to express his feelings, he actually spat at them in contempt. All his violence of action, however, failed of fixing the attention of his audience. The women were repeatedly engaged in loud talk; once, conversation seemed to be general throughout the house; and the boys, stationed near the altar for the purpose of aiding in the performance of prayers, manifested such a constant disposition to play, that he was once constrained to order them, in a rage, to be silenced by flogging. This was the only Armenian sermon we had an opportunity to attend, and in fact the only one we heard of, except at Shoosha, during our whole journey.

The bishop invited us, during prayers, to take a cup of tea with him; and after sermon, which was rather long, we followed him to his rooms. In passing out of the door, he stopped a moment to say a prayer over two corpses, that were laid there in preparation for burial. The ceremony was ended by placing an unconsecrated wafer upon the head of each. The information elicited by our conversation this morning, and by several others which we had with the bishop, is given in different connections elsewhere, and need not be repeated. At our first interview, however, some topics were discussed worthy of a distinct notice. We were introduced to him, by Mr. Nisbet, as priests

from the New World ; and his curiosity immediately suggested many questions respecting our ecclesiastical polity and doctrines. We replied that we belonged to the American church ; acknowledged no subjection to the pope ; and were under none of the churches of the Old World. He inquired whether we had bishops of our own ; and on learning that, though there are a few in the country, most of the people are not subject to them, he wondered where our priests could get ordination. We informed him that an assembly of priests performs the ceremony ; and met his astonishment at the irregularity of such a course, and his inquiry how priests can make priests, by asking, if bishops, in his church, can make a Catholicos who is greater than they, why cannot priests make a priest, who is their equal ? In this case only, during our journey, was such an objection made by an Armenian to our clerical orders, and our answer silenced, if it did not satisfy, the objector. In other cases surprise that we have only priests and deacons, was uniformly removed by a reference to the commonly acknowledged fact, that in the Armenian church all above deacons belong to the general order of priests. The idea of apostolical succession we never heard started, except as implied in the question of the bishop upon this occasion.

He seemed reluctant to believe that we were not papists, and assured some of the company, even after we had expressed in strong language our abhorrence of the pope, that we were connected with the Romish church. While we were protesting against such a mis-apprehension of our sentiments, a visitor, who seemed better acquainted with western theology than his bishop, inquired whether we were Lutherans or Calvinists. We consented to bear the latter name ; and still the bishop, unable to conceive that we should not belong to some sect within the range of his polemic theology, went on to ask if we were not followers

of Arius, or Nestorius. We reminded him, that after what we had said in a previous part of the conversation respecting the divinity of Christ, he might have omitted the name of Arius; and as to Nestorius, we had no connection with him and no acquaintance with his sect. Not contented with our bare assertion, he plied us with questions about the virgin, and was at once convinced, by our lax notions respecting her perpetual virginity, that we had imbibed the heresy of Nestorius. We explained, that it was a point to which we attached no importance, and that, so far as we knew, it had never been agitated among us. 'Why,' said he, with great astonishment, 'you are priests! what have you to preach about when points like this are deemed unimportant?' 'The fundamental doctrine of the gospel,' we replied, 'the death of Christ for the sins of the world, and the way of salvation through him. Certainly that is of sufficient importance to be preached.' We then proposed to him the direct question, 'What must we do to be saved?' He answered, as if we had asked a very unnecessary question, 'Why, we are saved already, and need only confess, do penance, and commune, and we shall go to heaven!'—His conversation assumed this argumentative character, only at our first interview; for at the next we directly declined all dispute, and he thus expressed his own abhorrence of it. 'You see,' said he, pointing to the colored glass in the window of his apartment, 'the rays of light, by passing through different panes, are cast in shades of red and green and yellow upon the floor, and yet they all come from the same sun, and are light still; so with the different sects, they all have one origin, and ought to feel that they are still Christian brethren.'

The reply of the bishop to the momentous question, 'What must we do to be saved?' was dictated by the doctrines of his church; and is, in substance, the same that is received by every one who goes to confess his sins in the

ear of his priest. Let us examine it in detail. The sins from which we need to be saved, are considered to be of two general kinds, *original* and *actual*. Adam's fall brought all his posterity under the dominion of Satan, to be led captive by him at his will. From this original sin, or in other words, this captivity to Satan, the consequence of the first transgression, Christ died to deliver us. The medium appointed for the application of this salvation to individuals, is baptism. All who are baptized, therefore, are saved from the Satanic dominion brought upon them by the original sin of Adam, and left at liberty to work out their salvation by serving God, or to secure their destruction by serving Satan, according to their own voluntary choice.

But if, after having thus received our share of the salvation of Christ, we choose again the service of Satan by the commission of actual sin, what can we do to be saved? We are directed, not to the intercession of our 'Advocate with the Father,' nor to his blood, which 'cleanseth us from all sin;' but to the confessional of the priest, and to his absolution. Without confession, no forgiveness is to be expected; but with it, it is sure upon two conditions. Hearty *contrition* for having committed the sins confessed is one, and making *satisfaction* or amends for them is the other. The former, it is to be feared, is almost universally little insisted on by the priests, and neglected by the people. In prescribing the appropriate satisfaction for particular sins, lies all the difficulty which the confessor experiences in the cure of souls. To aid him, sins are divided into mortal, and venial. The former are embraced under seven general classes, viz. sins of pride, envy, anger, sloth, covetousness, gluttony and lasciviousness; and are considered as deserving the eternal punishment of hell. The latter are not so exactly enumerated, and are deemed not fatal to the soul. The kinds of satisfaction, too, though

many, are carefully arranged into three classes, viz. fasting, prayer, and charity.

In view of this code of crimes and punishments, which, in the books of the church, is subdivided and explained with all the minuteness of a civil statute-book, the priest sits in judgment upon the sins confessed, and condemns the penitent to whichever kind of satisfaction seems their most appropriate retribution and best antidote; and proportions the length of the fasts, the number of prayers, or the amount of charity, to their enormity. The effect of this satisfaction, or penance, is supposed, in theory, to be three fold: to give evidence of sincere contrition for sin; to chasten and correct the evil propensities from which sin originates; and to be accepted by God as a substitute for the retribution of eternal torment in hell. In practice, it degenerates into a set of mere external heartless observances. The priest, having thus sat in judgment upon the sins of his fellow, and sentenced him to a mock retribution, ends his impious assumption of the prerogatives of God, by pronouncing pardon and the absolution of all connection between the sinner and the guilt of his sins.* This act of absolution declares the penitent to be again made capable of enjoying the benefit of his good works, and he starts afresh to merit heaven, by fasting, alms-giving, pilgrimages, masses, the communion, and other similar ceremonies.

Such is a brief, but tolerably complete view of what the Armenians are told they must do to be saved. It is not a system of salvation by *grace* in Christ, for it looks not to him for pardon; nor of salvation by *good works*, for it depends not upon morality for acceptance with God; but of salvation by *ceremonies*, for it makes the observance of superstitious rites a set-off against a life of sin. It neglects

* In this account of the Armenian way of salvation, I have closely followed the Armeno-Turkish Catechism, already repeatedly quoted. See p. 55, ss.

equally the law and the gospel, and would send men to heaven without an atonement, and without morality. In one respect, however, the Armenian church is behind the papal, in its attempts to work out a way to heaven of its own contriving. It has never devised any great reservoir of the superogatory merits of Christ and the saints, the key of which is lodged with an earthly vicegerent of heaven, empowered to dole them out at pleasure to whomsoever is so rich or so fortunate as to obtain his favor. In other words, it knows nothing of the whole system of *indulgences*.

It did not enter into our plan to make many inquiries respecting the Persians, nor do I deem it important to publish all that we actually learned respecting them. You may wonder, indeed, that I call the moslems of this province *Persians*; for, with the exception of the Kürds on the west and south, they are all of the *Turkish* race, and speak the Turkish tongue. A few at Türkmán-chai, in the direction of Teherán, though they have now no connection with their brethren farther east, have retained the particular name of Türkmán. The rest are of the same mixed descent, from all the Turkish tribes that have overrun this region since the days of Tóghrul, as those to whom your attention has been already directed to the north of the Aras, and they speak the same dialect of Turkish. Persian is spoken by none, except as a foreign language.—But you must remember that Persia is inhabited by a ‘mingled people,’ and the title of *Mulook-el-tawaiif*, or kings of the nations, once given by the Arabs to its Sassanian kings, would be perfectly appropriate to its present rulers. The fixed inhabitants of towns and villages in almost every part, except the provinces bordering upon Turkey and the Caspian, speak the Persian language; and among them doubtless are the remains of the ancient Persians, though they have also a large amount of Arabic and other blood. But the Persians have

almost always been a subject race; and now the citizen and the peasant hold a less honorable rank than the nomad. Between seven and eight hundred thousand of the inhabitants of Persia still live in tents; and while not one of them is of the Persian language, they furnish the flower of her army, and the pride of her nobility. Turkish, Arabic, Kürdish, and Loorish are their native tongues. The Shah himself is of a Turkish nomadic tribe. If we would confine the name of Persian to those who are of the Persian language, therefore, we must deny even to the sovereign of the country his title of citizenship. The title of *Persian*, however, is one of which he is ignorant. The Persians do not acknowledge the name we give them and their country. *Fars*, or *Farsistán*, from which it is derived, is known to them only as the province of which Shiráz is the capital. *Irán* is now, and has been from the earliest ages, the indigenous name of the whole kingdom. Their neighbors, the Turks and Arabs, call it, with genuine Grecian arrogance, the land of *Ajem*, or barbarians. We have perpetuated the mistake of the ancient *Grecians*, and shall probably continue to regard it as needing correction less, than many of the errors which 'lying Greece' has told us in history. While we persevere, therefore, in extending the name of a province over the whole realm, I see no objection to applying it also to the whole nation, or at least to all who profess the national religion, so as to include the moslems of Aderbaján.

Though Persian is not the native language of the moslems of Aderbaján, however, it is spoken by many. It is the language of trade and of government, and is familiar to some even of the lower orders in towns. It shares with the Arabic the attention of all who enjoy the privilege of schools; and they are many in Persia. We were assured by an extensive and acute observer, that the Persians set an example to even Christian nations, in the extent of com-

mon education. He judged that two thirds of the males can read. There are a few schools only for females; but in every village, except the smallest, there are at least two mollahs, one of whom acts as a teacher for boys. In some instances gentlemen of wealth employ private instructors, and then the children of their servants and slaves, as well as their own, enjoy their instructions. Generally schools are kept only in mosks; and those who teach them are always, either really mollahs, or are ranked with them; the profession of schoolmaster being regarded as a branch of the priesthood. The objects of education are religion and business. The first is provided for by learning to read the Korán, and repeat a few prayers in Arabic. An understanding of the supposed revelation of the will of *God*, and of what is addressed to him in prayer, however, seems not to be regarded as necessary; and the Arabic branch is generally carried no farther than to a correct pronounciation of words. But the medium of intercourse with *man* must be understood, and the meaning, as well as the sound of Persian words is taught at school. Still, I apprehend that only a small portion of the boys in this province study long enough to become proficient in the language.

The first trait in the character of a Persian, that strikes a traveller coming from Turkey, is his civility. The respect shown by the lower orders to the higher, even of *their own countrymen*, is greater in Persia than in the neighboring empire. Turks in office are treated with deference by their dependents; but no nobility, nor any hereditary distinction of rank, being acknowledged, much of a feeling of republican equality and of individual independence is still discernible, and every Turk seems to regard every other, somewhat in the light of a brother. Persia, on the contrary, is a land of high-toned aristocracy. Nobles, both hereditary and otherwise, are numerous. The title of *khan* distinguishes all, except those of the royal blood, who

are known by that of *mirza* appended to their name. It is not confined to moslems; Armenians also are sometimes graced with it. The nobles and the rich aim at the greatest state in equipage and servants; in tenaciousness for points of etiquette they can hardly be exceeded; and display and splendor seem to be all that they admire. The lower orders take the attitude of extreme obsequiousness; no forms of homage savor too much of servitude for them to render; especially if they are dependents, is their manner of service marked with a resemblance to worship, to which no parallel can be found, perhaps, nearer than India.

The manners of the Persians toward *foreigners* differ from those of the Turks, even more than their form of intercourse with each other. The Turkish gentleman receives you sitting, coolly puts his hand upon his breast for a salutation, asks you to sit as if the invitation in any form was an act of condescension, and a few common-place questions, with long intervals of silence filled up by pipes and coffee, complete the ceremonies of your reception. The Persian, not only honors you by rising; but, putting you at once into the position of his lord, and assuming the attitude of your slave, he forces you into his own seat, if it happen to be the most honorable. An active conversation, enlivened by inquisitive thought, and polished with a profusion of compliment, succeeds; and you leave him with the feeling, that he has improved upon the politeness of the politest nation of Europe. Even the moslem peasant of Turkey would fain treat you as his inferior, and disdains to act as your servant; but the Persian, not only scruples not to fill the most menial station, but makes a more respectful and submissive domestic, than I have found in any other nation.

Such civility highly prepossesses the *traveller*, at first, in favor of the society of the nation which exercises it; and makes the *missionary* hope that his instructions may be

received with as much deference as his person. Experience soon convinces both, however, that if the Persian excels in politeness, he is forced to it as a mask to cover his deceitfulness. The commonest man is found almost as dexterous in plot and intrigue, as if he were practised in managing the diplomacy of Europe; and the allurements of the Persian's civility, are soon eclipsed by painful experience of his unequalled duplicity. The traveller finds his hospitality converted into a money-making speculation. Not long since a khan, who had been educated in the Persian school, sought out an English traveller and his lady, as they were passing through a neighboring city in the Russian territories, and hospitably compelled them to accept of gratuitous accommodations in his house and at his table for a number of days. At their departure, he saved them the trouble of going to the police office, by procuring their passports himself, and brought with them a pretended charge from the inspector for about 50 or 60 dollars. The traveller, though aware that not a cent is asked of foreigners for passports in Russia, was ashamed to doubt the word of one from whom he had experienced such attentions, and paid the amount; thus replacing in the purse of his host, perhaps twice as much as his entertainment had cost. Not many years since, a missionary, as he was passing through a city in Persia, had an audience of the prince royal, and obtained from him, as he supposed, most liberal offers of patronage and support for a missionary school. But when we were at Tebriz, the khan who acted as interpreter boasted of having most egregiously deceived both. During a long conversation, he so perverted the remarks of each, in converting them from one language to the other, as to make the missionary propose to the prince a school for teaching only the language and the learning of the English, and argue in its favor, when in fact his proposal and his arguments were all religious; and

to make the prince, with no more than such a mere literary institution in mind, approve most fully an attempt to give Persian children a Christian education, and promise to send his own sons. The missionary and the prince separated equally gratified, the one at having secured such high patronage for his benevolent projects, and the other at the literary prospects opening to his children; and the khan now amuses his friends by the relation of his dexterous duplicity. So much are the Persians given to falsehood and deceit, in their dealings with each other, that mutual confidence is hardly known. In the mercantile profession, good faith scarcely exists among the minor tradesmen, and is strictly observed only by those whose business is so extensive as to render credit absolutely necessary to success. In a word, so disgusted did we become with the smooth duplicity of Persia, that we were not displeased to return again to the blunt, I had almost said honest, incivility of Turkey.

The Persian, of Aderbaján especially, differs also from the Turk, in his readiness to admit European innovations. The Sultán has recently, indeed, made havoc of all the prejudices of his countrymen; but the Turk had formerly, not a strong prejudice only, but an absolute contempt, for almost every fashion that came to him from the west. One would suppose that his religion was bound up in the folds of his turban, and that his honor would vanish with the loss of his shalwár; so obstinately was he attached to those articles of dress. In his whole routine of habits, too, he seemed to delight in the contrary of the practice of his European neighbors. The moslem of this province of Persia, manifests little dislike for what is European. Tread not upon his carpet with your shoes, nor touch his beard with your razor, and he will make few objections to your hat or pantaloons, and will imitate you in the furniture of his house and his table. The military tactics of Europe,

with an imitation of its uniform, were introduced by Abbas Mirza, long before even Mohammed Aly attempted them in Egypt. Chairs and tables are used in the houses of some of the rich at Tebriz; several beautiful porcelain tea-sets, of the latest English fashion were eagerly bought up when we were there; and many shops in the bazár were stocked with a variety of European table furniture. In short the rich Persian is fond of fashion, and that which comes the farthest, is in some cases at least liked the best.

But you must not imagine, because Persians may be induced to adopt articles of a European's dress or furniture, that therefore they have no dislike to his religion, or his person. According to the strictest of their tenets, the touch of a Christian, or of what a Christian has touched, is ceremonially impure, and unfits them for the performance of their devotions. A high sense of ceremonial purity is the distinctive trait of the sheey sect. In doctrine, more stress may be laid upon the exaltation of Aly, and the rejection of the first three kalifs, with the traditions compiled under their direction; but in practice, this stands most prominent. One is inclined, indeed, to imagine it to be a plant of Hindoo, rather than of sheey origin, and perhaps it is, but it seems now to be indigenous wherever that sect exists. I have known a Metawaly, (the sheey of Syria,) break a jar, for its having been polluted by the mere touch of a Christian's lips for a draught of water. Such a dread of ceremonial impurity makes a nation exceedingly inhospitable. The rule, indeed, is not observed in all its strictness by the Persians. Some, especially in private, regard it not at all. In the Russian provinces it has less influence than in Aderbaiján, and here less than in other parts of Persia. Even in this province, however, the common people will often try many expedients to prevent one of another sect from entering their houses, and in many places would suffer a foreigner to sleep in the street, rather than

open their doors to him. To eat from the same dish with him, is the extreme of pollution, and none but those whose liberality approaches to infidelity will do it. We have known our muleteers to search for a moslem village at some distance from the one where we lodged with Christians, in order not to eat bread of Christian cooking; and always when we were going into a Christian region, did they lay in a stock of provisions at the last moslem market. In order not to pollute the dishes of those who entertained us, we carried our own kitchen and table furniture; and more than once, I doubt not, we might have been denied a draught of cold water, had we not carried our own drinking cup. Once we were amused to see an old Persian, to whom we had paid a small silver coin, go and wash it thoroughly in a tank of water before he put it in his purse. The whole sect says by its conduct to every other, 'Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou.' Even the sünni moslems of Turkey are not exempted from the general charge of impurity.

The trait of a Persian's character which most gratifies the missionary, is his readiness to discuss religious topics. The Turk meets with a haughty frown the most distant attempt to commend the religion of Christ, takes as an unpardonable insult the denial of the mission of Mohammed, and despises the Bible as too corrupt a copy of the Law and the Gospel to be worthy of his notice. The Persian receives the New Testament with reverence. The English residents at Tebriz unanimously testified that no objection is made, by either mollahs or people there, to its being circulated and read. We found a copy exposed for sale, by the side of the Korán and the Persian poets, in the shop of a moslem bookseller in the bazár of that city. It is in some degree sought after. Mr. Nisbet disposed, while we were there, of the last of his small stock, consisting, I believe, of twenty or thirty copies. The purchasers always

professed to receive it as the word of God, declared that they were interested by the perusal of it, and in no case, with the exception of the set of passages which speak of the divine nature of Christ, did they object to any part of it as spurious. Three copies were taken by our second Ledyard, already alluded to, on leaving Tebriz for his second visit to the valley of the Indus; where he hoped to exchange them for some old Greek manuscripts, which he had seen there, and imagined to be relics of the Bactrian colonies. Another was purchased, to be taken to Meccà, by a pilgrim who left after our arrival. No Christian can fail to be gratified at seeing the word of God penetrate, even by single copies, into such a centre of superstition as Mecca, and such a region of robbery and ignorance as the upper Indus. What a happy exchange for the Afghán, to receive the pearl of great price, while contributing to enrich the historical treasures of Europe! And how delighted would be the pilgrim, to find Jesus Christ the chief corner stone, and be washed from his sins in his blood, so as no longer to trust in the stone of the Kaabah, or seek purification from the water of Zemzem!

The Persians are comparatively tolerant, also, of a discussion of the merits of Mohammedanism, and many will argue with all the technical coolness of a dialectician. Most of the higher class of the nobility, and the learned profession, indeed, pay little regard even to the external forms of religion, and are at heart infidels or skeptics. In fact, *Soofy* is known to be little better than another name for skeptic, and the number of that school in Persia is estimated by Sir John Malcolm, at two or three hundred thousand. I do not adduce the free use of wine, which is said to be indulged in by many of the rich in secret, as an evidence of religious liberality; for it is both an unwelcome, and a deceitful test. I am no more pleased with the liberality of the moslem, than I am with that of the Christian wine-

bibber; and often is indulgence in the cup united with unusual bigotry, as if to make up for the breach of one commandment, by an over strict observance of the others. Shah Abbas the Second could lie drunk for days in succession, and yet fear pollution from the touch of a ring of Christian manufacture, until it had been purified by water.* As many of the nobility and the learned are assembled at Teherán and Shiráz, those places contain more religious liberality than others. Merchants are in Persia the most bigoted of the respectable classes, and they are numerous at Isfahán. Tebriz has seen much of foreigners, and therefore probably stands first in liberality toward European innovations.

You must not understand that all Persians are inclined to freethinking. The mass of the people are not only very sincere in their faith, but have decidedly an appearance of greater strictness in the observance of their rites than even the Turks. I have already spoken of their prayers, and of their regard for ceremonial purity. In their ablutions, too, they adhere nicely to the rigid prescriptions of the sheey sect. Often have we known our fatigued muleteers, on reaching a stream of water with parched tongues, use it for purposes of purification, before quenching their thirst. Their observance of the Ramadán is exact to the letter of the law; and attended with an unusual appearance of religious feeling. Even our muleteers, when travelling on foot in that fast at the rate sometimes of more than thirty miles a day, never ate a morsel, drank a drop, or smoked a pipe, from early dawn till sunset. In the bazárs of Tebriz, during that period, a large part of the merchants were to be seen reading the Korán, as they sat in their stalls; and more that once we found them too attentively engaged in it to wait upon us as customers. Even on common days most of them had their Koráns by their side;

* Chardin, vol. 6: p. 319.

and many a time, as I looked upon them, did I ask myself, upon how many merchants' counters in our cities does the Bible appear! Frequently, in passing through the bazárs, we saw persons addressing a crowd assembled around them. They were dervishes preaching or telling tales to the people. Once in Khoy, we found a venerable old man in the public square, seated upon a horse and supported by a long spear which he rested upon the ground, addressing most eloquently a listening multitude around him. He might have sat for the picture of the eloquent dervish, which Hareery has so finely drawn in his first *Makámeh*. Dervishes seemed to be more numerous here than in Turkey.

Even among the free-thinking part of the community, a nearer view will discover hardly an easier access for the truth. They are either wrapt in a bewildering labyrinth of philosophical speculations, or are utterly regardless of all religion. Sometimes they will carelessly admit all your arguments, and at others reject them merely for the sake of disputing; depriving you equally, in both cases, of the hope of producing a conviction of the truth. To such a result, there is still another obstacle. The opprobrium of apostasy from Mohammedanism would be universal and great. I have already intimated the prince's willingness that his children should be taught the language and learning of England. A school for those branches would doubtless be very popular among the higher classes in Tebriz; and the Scriptures might be used in it as a class-book, without objection. But it is questionable whether, as soon as it was discovered that the pupils were receiving a bias in favor of our religion, every one would not be withdrawn. It is doubted whether any Persian would knowingly allow his child to imbibe partialities for Christianity. A convert to Christianity would probably, we were assured, in any oth-

er part of Persia, suffer the penalty of the Mohammedan law; but in his province, the probability is that he would not. The mollahs would indeed do their best to influence the people against him, but they are hardly enough respected to be able to create any dangerous expression of popular wrath. The prince would be likely to protect him.

LETTER XIX.

FROM TEBRIZ TO SALMAS.

Route proposed—Leave Tebriz—Sahalán—Condition of the peasantry—Deezeh-khaleel—Inhospitability—A Sabbath in Ramadán—Shehwály—Lake of Oormiah—District of Günieh—Salt plains—Dilmán—Van and Aghtamár—Khósrova, a Chaldean village—Modern origin of the Chaldean sect—Chaldeans of these parts—Their political condition—Their religious rites—State of papal missions in Persia—Pretender to the throne of Georgia—Excursion to Old Salmás—The Jews of these parts—A Chaldean wedding.

DEAR SIR,

OUR Instructions directed our attention to the Nestorian and Chaldean Christians of Kúrdistán, and a deep interest in those almost unknown sects made us determine from the first, if possible, to visit them. Supposing also, from the fact that El Koosh near Mosul has long been the seat of the oldest patriarchate of the former, while the spiritual head of the latter resides at Diarbekr, that they would be most accessible from the southern side of the Kúrdish mountains, we proposed likewise to pass through Mesopotamia. Especially, as we should thus comply with another item of our Instructions, which suggested the possibility of our finding it expedient to return by way of Syria. Tebriz was fixed upon, as the best place for obtaining information to direct us, in the accomplishment of this part of our tour. We here had confirmed, what had previously been told us, that the only practicable route for penetrating into Mesopotamia, is by way of Bagdád. But disease had already detained us from arriving in those warm regions so early in

the cool season as was desirable, and we were informed from authentic sources, that civil dissensions had hedged up even that route. The pashá of Bagdád, having not only refused to send his regular contribution to the Sultán, but slain an officer, who had come to exact it, had been declared a rebel; and an army was marching from the neighboring pashaliks of Diarbekr and Aleppo, to reduce him. In these circumstances, not only was the rebel pashá using the greatest vigilance to prevent even letters from conveying in that direction any information of the state of his city; but the Yezedies near Mosul, absolved from fear of the old government, and not yet submitted to the new, were committing the most daring outrages upon all who passed; and even under the walls of Bagdád, so great was the disorder, that robberies were frequent.

To proceed with such prospects would be the extreme of imprudence, and we therefore wrote to Bagdád for the latest information, and turned our attention to the Nestorians and Chaldeans on this side of Kürdistán. The English at Tebriz confessed an almost entire ignorance of their religious doctrines and character, and no one at that place could give us much information respecting them. Almost the only important fact we learned, was that a considerable body of Nestorians were accessible in the provinces of Oormiah and Salmás: and, my health being sufficiently restored by the last of winter to allow of travelling again, we determined to visit them. In order not to go and return by the same route, we concluded to make the circuit of the lake of Oormiah. The government, at the solicitation of the acting envoy, furnished us with a *rákam*, or passport, containing an order for the local authorities to pay us every necessary attention, and give us guards if we should need them. And Capt. Campbell, and Maj. Willock, supplied us with recommendatory letters to the chief officers and khans of Oormiah, Marágha, and one or two other places.

We started on the morning of the 4th of March. To find myself again on horse-back, after so long a confinement, was not a little exhilarating, and feelings of restored strength made me regardless of the piercing wind of a bleak March morning. We crossed the river Ajy by a brick bridge of several arches; and a gravelly plain, white in spots with salt, extended thence to Sahalán, where we stopped at half past 12, three fúrsakhs from Tebriz. It was a small village of only 40 houses, and surrounded by a ruined mud wall. All its inhabitants, like those of every village around, were moslems; and, the sun being obscured by clouds, they came every ten or fifteen minutes, for at least two hours before sunset, to know from our watches if the time drew near, when, by the laws of the Ramadán, they were allowed to eat. We were the guests of the *kéthhoda*, or lord of the village. Having observed on arriving that most of the terraces were arched, instead of being flat as usual, we inquired the reason. He informed us that the timbers which formerly supported them, were burnt by the Russians, and in the absence of any others to supply their place, it was found necessary to construct arches of unburnt bricks. In this woodless region, beams for a terrace are a rare and choice article. A species of poplar is cultivated in most villages for the purpose, being planted, like the *sinjid*, along the margin of canals.

Our host informed us that his village was the property of a khan, to whom and to government its inhabitants pay three tenths of their produce. We afterward learned from an intelligent gentleman, that the law of the land imposes upon all peasants a tax of two tenths of what they reap from their fields; if freeholders, as not a few are, the remainder is their own; if not, one tenth more is given to the proprietor. The latter cannot increase his demands, nor can he remove any peasants from their farms. The peasant, however, to escape illegal exactions, often flees

of his own accord to the soil of some other proprietor, and there receives land, protection, and freedom from rent for a certain number of years. A powerful check is thus imposed upon oppression. Other taxes are exacted by government. A peasant in another village stated them to be, for his townsmen, two *reáls* (about 75 cents) for every house, ox, cow, and buffalo; one *penabád* (about 15 cents) for every sheep; one *reál* for every house; a capitation tax of six *reáls* for every male over sixteen; and a certain sum for every fruit tree in their gardens, and every *batmán* (a square measure) of ground in their vineyards. The gentleman just mentioned declared, that the peasants of Persia are placed by the laws in a more eligible situation than those of any state of Europe; and that little distinction is made between Christians and moslems; the former not being forbidden to wear arms, nor, in their own villages at least, meeting with any hindrance to the building of churches. Another gentleman confirmed the opinion that the laws are very mild; but said, what our own observation every where confirmed, that their *mal-administration*, and the abuses of under-officers, now grind the peasant to the dust. From Aderbaján, for example, the whole of the tribute demanded by government is six or seven hundred thousand tománs; but the collection of it is so universally embraced as an occasion for filling the pockets of every officer through whose hands it passes, from the lowest collector to the minister around the throne, that fifteen hundred thousand are supposed to be actually exacted. Though oppressive rulers deprive the subject of his money, however, the want of a police leaves him the full enjoyment of what, in some countries, seems to be almost as highly prized. The *liberty of speech* is fully enjoyed; and every one seems to vituperate his ruler, with almost as little scruple as he does his neighbor.

March 5. From Sahalán to Deezeh-khaleel we took a

circuitous road, along the foot of the mountains on the northern side of the great plain of Tebriz, and found it tolerably dry. On another occasion we pursued a more direct route from the bridge, through Alvár and Aly-shah, and were much impeded by mud. Indeed, the plain as viewed from Deezeh-khaleel, appears, in the vicinity of the lake to the south, to be a marsh. To-day all the mountains around were white to their base with snow, which had fallen in the night; and high and piercing winds occasionally brought over us some of the snow squalls which still lingered upon their tops. In the latter part of our ride, we passed at a distance, first on the right, and then on the left, a number of villages, some of which appeared large and flourishing. In their vicinity were many fields of the grain of this year, and the dry cotton of last; but most of the plain was fallow. Nothing is cultivated without irrigation; and for that every field is divided into small patches, like ponds, a rod or two square. On entering Deezeh-khaleel the road became enclosed between mud walls, from ten to fifteen feet high. In the outskirts they surrounded extensive fruit gardens, in which, besides now and then a house, could be discovered through an occasional opening, the apple, pear, peach and vine. The latter had been left exposed the whole winter. The same high walls throughout the village concealed almost every thing from our view, and only a small hole occasionally indicated the existence of a house within. Such are most of the respectable villages in this part of Persia.

We had sent Antonio forward to request a room of the kétkhoda; but, after travelling through street after street without meeting hardly an individual, we almost despaired of finding him. At length a number of boys were seen peeping slyly around the corners of the streets, and dodging away, as if a wild beast, or some other fearful object of curiosity were there. It was Antonio. He had

been told that the kékkhoda was not at home, and then conducted to a stable for lodgings. Our rákam had been shown, and boys paid to guide him to the house of the kékkhoda, in vain. They led him only to a house without an inhabitant. A few words from us procured a guide to the kékkhoda's; but he was not to be found, and a boy at the door hesitated to admit us. We passed him, and found an elder brother within, who, seeing us fairly entered, apologized for the other's incivility, confessed that his father was the kékkhoda, conducted us to a comfortable upper room, spread it immediately with carpets, brought a dish of fine apples for a *peshkêsh* (present), and offered the house for our own and himself for our servant. The father soon came, but denied at once that he was the kékkhoda, and called his son a foolish boy for saying he was. He soon inquired of Antonio if our rákam ordered the village to bear our expenses. The reply, that we intended to pay for every thing, immediately changed his tone; we might stay as long as we pleased, every thing we called for was a present, and no one could tell how he loved us. He hesitated not to acknowledge that he was the kékkhoda.

The mystery was now explained. The sight of our rákam, which Antonio had incautiously shown at first, had given the impression that he perhaps was a mihmandár, and that we were to be quartered gratuitously upon the village, the Persian government being in the habit of procuring thus a forced hospitality for travellers. Deezeh-khaleel is the name of two villages separated only by a wall, and each afraid to receive us, had sent Antonio from one to the other. We had ourselves been sent, by the affrighted inhabitants of Khaleel, over to their neighbors of Deezeh. You need not a word from us to understand the faults of a government, and the misery of a people, where an oppressor is thus feared in every passing traveller. This is but one instance out of many of a similar reception. At Aly-

shah, a large and respectable village, we labored an hour and a half, on our return, before any one would admit us. In order to manage the thing properly, Mr. Dwight went forward upon that occasion to look for lodgings. The kékthoda was not to be found. Offers to pay for our lodgings were of no avail; not even a stable could be procured. And though the public square, on Mr. Dwight's arrival, was full of gay inhabitants celebrating the *Noróz*, the greatest festival of the Persians, his appearance dispersed them so suddenly, that when I came up hardly an individual appeared in the streets.—Deezeh-khaleel contains 400 or 500 houses, and is inhabited entirely by moslems. They are freeholders, but are appropriated to a high officer, who is ordered by government to obtain his salary from them. Villages seem to be often given thus to particular individuals in Persia, and from the practice, doubtless, arises much of the oppression experienced by the peasantry.

March 6. We spent a quiet Sabbath at Deezeh-khaleel. The atmosphere, purified by the squalls of yesterday, was delightfully serene, and we enjoyed much a walk in the fields. Occasionally a keen breath of air came down from the snowy mountain on the north; but only enough to make grateful the warm rays of the sun, which fell through a cloudless sky upon the broad plain to the south. The fields had the quietness of the same holy day at home, as if even the moslems around us had been seized with reverence for the sacredness of the Christian Sabbath. The cause, however, was different. The Ramadán had taken away for the present their strength and inclination for labor. Our house was not altogether so quiet. Last night, before we were aware, and while we were dining by his side, our host began a session of his court, seated upon my bed. Before it was finished, a hint that we were sleepy, caused him to adjourn. On rising to-day, we found him with his neighbors, holding the balance of justice, upon the ground

in the street before his door. The cold soon forced them into the stable; and from thence loud and boisterous voices, elicited by the progress of the cause, were ascending all the morning.—He informed us that his father lived to the age of 120 years. The prince, on hearing of his extreme longevity, caused him to visit him at Tebriz, and place his hand upon his head, hoping thereby himself to reach the same age; such an effect being commonly ascribed to the imposition of the hands of an aged man. The anecdote reminded me of Jacob's interview with Pharaoh; and suggested the query, whether such a ceremony and idea may not explain the singular circumstance, that a plain shepherd should *bless* a powerful king.

March 7. Our day's ride was from Deezeh-khaleel to Shehwály, a distance of four fúrsakhs. The country had an undulating and gravelly surface, and gradually declined from the mountain on the right to the lake, which was not far off, on the left. A number of villages appeared in different directions. A mile or two from Shehwály, a road branches off toward Khoy. It was the one by which we had first reached Tebriz. We now turned to the left toward Salmás. The same difficulties in finding lodgings were experienced again to-day. To avoid them, I went forward myself. The kétékhoda as usual was not to be found, and a stable was offered for our lodgings. I pleaded mildly, and offered to pay well for a better room, but a bold and absolute refusal was the only answer. The rákam was then shown, and more authoritative language used, but a milder refusal was the only effect. At length a young man, pretending to have learned from a perusal of the rákam that we were distinguished characters, came forward with a smiling face to apologize for the incivility of his townsmen, and to offer us excellent lodgings. He conducted us to the same stable! We had begun to doubt whether, in so miserable a little village, we could do better,

and therefore, responding to his smile, accepted his offer. All were at once on the best terms with us, and the whole village was so glad to see us disposed of with no more inconvenience to themselves, that whatever we wanted was immediately at our command. The fact that we found these difficulties only in moslem villages, and that offers of money did not in every case remove them, seems to show that they are connected with a fear of ceremonial defilement, as well as an apprehension of expense. In one case, an old moslem host sat constantly by us, to see that we did not drink wine, and drop it upon his carpets.

Shehwály being but a few rods from the lake of Oormiah, (called also Shahy lake,) we rode down to its shore in the afternoon. Its water was exceedingly saline, and some salt was deposited in crevices of the rocks along its margin. No unusual taste was perceptible, but it is said to have a medicinal effect; and the fact that no fish of any kind inhabit the lake, indicates the presence of some unusual ingredients. It is nowhere more than a few feet in depth, and is without an outlet. A few boats are said to ply upon it between Oormiah and Marágha. The island upon which Hoolakoo built the castle for his treasures, appears distinctly from Shehwály. Other islands also rise out of its tranquil waters, and with the lofty mountains around, contribute to form a beautiful landscape. The lake of Oormiah is remarkable for the alluvial plains which surround it. They extend up between the mountains like bays, and their appearance suggests the inquiry whether they were not once covered with water. We have already viewed the plain of Tebriz. Another lies on the north, where we now were, between the lake and the pass in the mountains through which we came from Khoy. Its extent is not great, but in the vicinity of the mountains it is fertile, and contains a number of villages. The principal is Tesooch, or Tesy. We passed through it twice on other

occasions. It exhibits many ruins indicative of former consequence, among which are two old and well built mosks. At present its inhabitants seem to be few, but it is the capital of a district called Günieh, which, besides this plain, extends far enough to embrace also Deezeh-khaleel, a distance of five or six fursakhs. Its site is upon the level plain, but the other villages appear upon the foot of the mountains, with their fields and gardens reaching from them toward the lake, until the soil becomes too much impregnated with salt to allow of cultivation.—No Armenians inhabit the district of Günieh.

March 8. We rode around the northern extremity of the lake. Myriads of large ducks were flying over it, swimming upon its surface, and wading in the salt marshes upon its shore. The flat over which we travelled was white in almost every part, with an incrustation of salt, which had exuded from its surface. The quantity was here unusually great, but similar appearances in these parts are extremely frequent. I have already mentioned instances in the valley of the Aras, and in the plain of Tebriz. Repeatedly were we disappointed on reaching a limpid brook, to find it too strongly impregnated with saline matter to quench our thirst. This plain is nearly destitute of running water. As a substitute, not only for drinking but for irrigation, (without which nothing is cultivated,) the villagers save in successive tanks the water that is brought down by winter torrents from the mountains. To avoid, I suppose, its being impregnated with the mineral properties of the soil, it is conducted from the reservoirs to the villages, in covered canals sunk eight or ten feet under ground. Their course is marked by a succession of open wells, only a rod or two apart, descending to the water. A ride of four fursakhs brought us to Khanadán, at the northwest corner of the lake. It is the last spot in the district of Günieh. The village was out of sight in some ravine of the mountains;

and only a shop stood by the road for the convenience of travellers.

Here another plain extended westward from the lake, like that of Tebriz toward the east. It was the district of Salmás. Mountains surround it on three sides, and the part nearest the shore is, for some distance, marshy. We took a direction toward its southwest corner, from the gravelly elevation around Khanadán; and again entered ancient Armenia, for Salmás was embraced within its limits. The first village was three fúrsakhs distant, and before we reached it no cultivation appeared, much of the surface being white with salt. Beyond, the soil assumed an aspect of great fertility, and was highly cultivated throughout. One fúrsakh more brought us to Dilmán, the present capital of the province, and finished our day's ride of eight fúrsakhs. Finding no comfortable room in the caravanserai, we sent Antonio to solicit lodgings from the governor. Some refused to show him the house, others gave him a wrong direction; and when he at last found it, the governor was not at home. A merchant in the bazár, in the meantime, invited us to be seated by him, and, while a number attracted by curiosity gathered around, began to question us respecting the movements of Abbas Mirza, and our own object in travelling. We learned that there were then several agents of the prince in town, exacting money and soldiers from its inhabitants. At Deezeh-khaleel, too, the cause of the kétkhoda's court was the imposition of a new tax. And strange as it may seem that we could be imagined to have any connection with government, it is possible that a vague fear lest some additional imposition should follow in our train, increased the universal reluctance to receive us. The return of Antonio seemed to place us in the alternative of creeping into a dirty hole in the caravanserai, or of sleeping in the street. We appealed to a crowd around to know if they would suffer

strangers to fare thus, and one stepped forward to offer us lodgings in his house. His room was good, and the entertainment he gave us generous.

Dilmán is a market town, fortified by a regular mud wall. Its houses are six or seven hundred in number, all built of mud, and inhabited only by moslems. Salmás, with a part of the neighboring province of Khoy, is the seat of one of the pastoral tribes of Persia called *Lek*. Their language is the Turkish, and their faith the shëey. A khan of their race is governor of Dilmán, and of the district of which it is the capital.—A road leads from this place to Van, a distance of about 24 fursakhs, which is frequently travelled by small caravans without danger. Another leads from Tebriz to the same place by Khoy, and is not far from the same length. We wished to return to Erzroom by way of Van, and were prevented only by the information that robbers beset the road between those places. We regretted our disappointment the more, as Van is said to be in the centre of a fine province, which contains a great number of Armenians. It is the residence of a Turkish pashá of three tails. The vicinity also of the Catholicos of Aghtamár increases a missionary's interest in it. Saint-Martin is mistaken in affirming that he is of the Greek faith. The branch of the Armenian church of which he is the head, is in regular communion with the others. His diocese, however, is extremely small. Bishop Israel of Tebriz affirmed that it is limited to the island in which he resides. But the secretary of the Catholicos at Echmiádzin assured us, that some districts in the Kürdish mountains also acknowledge his supremacy.

March 9. We rode to Khósrova, a Chaldean village about two miles from Dilmán.—The present Chaldean Christians are of recent origin. It was in A. D. 1681, that the Nestorian metropolitan of Diarbekr, having quarrelled with his patriarch, was first consecrated by the pope

patriarch of the Chaldeans. The sect was as new as the office, and was created for it. Converts to papacy from the Nestorian and Jacobite churches were united in one body, and dignified by the name of the Chaldean church. It means no more than papal Syrians; as we have in other parts papal Armenians, and papal Greeks. The name of the first patriarch happened to be Yoosuf (Joseph), the same was assumed by his successors, and a *Mar Yoosuf* now occupies the see of Diarbekr, as patriarch of the Chaldeans.* Khósrova is the residence of the bishop of all who are on this side of the Kürdish mountains. As we rode up to his house, an old man with a long Kürdish cap, green turban, and ragged sheep-skin pelisse, came out to welcome us. It was Mar Yohanna, the bishop. He received us civilly, but being too poor to lodge us, he referred us to his priest for a room.

The bishop having been educated at Rome, and lived some time at Aleppo, Mosul and Bagdád, spoke both Italian and Arabic with considerable fluency. Bishop's orders were conferred upon him by the pope's vicar at Bagdád in consequence of instructions from Rome. He seemed, perhaps from age, to be possessed of little energy or intelligence, and evidently dependent for every thing upon his priest. The priest, too, though a native of the village, had been twelve years in the college of the Propaganda at Rome. He spoke Italian with ease, and being very communicative, answered our questions with readiness. We afterward found that his information respecting the Nestorians was strongly tinged by his prejudices against them. The bishop's was still more so; and we learned to distrust whatever they said of that sect. Both of them were given to profaneness, and an oath, or some similar expression, often slipped from their tongues. The priest informed us,

* Assemani Bib. Orient. vol. 3: p. 623. Niebuhr, Voy. en Arab. vol. 2: p. 328.

that the inhabitants of this village are all Chaldeans, and are only 150 families in number; though another man, who said he had a list of them, affirmed that they amount to 170 families. They are indigenous to the spot, and were converted from the Nestorian to the papal church about a century ago. In the other villages of the province of Salmás, there are but few of their sect. Oola contains 26 families, Gooleeza 20, Patavor 15, Khaghia 7, and 6 are scattered elsewhere. In the province of Oormiah they reckon about 200 families, most of whom are in the village of Barbary. Add about 30 families who emigrated from this vicinity with the Russians to Sharoor, in the province of Eriván, and, (if the statements of the priest are correct,) you have a complete list of all the Chaldeans of these parts, amounting to about 2300 souls. They have, in all, but four priests besides our informant, three of whom are in the province of Oormiah, and one here; and none but him has had any other than a native education. The diocese acknowledges the supremacy of the Chaldean patriarch at Diarbekr, and occasionally receives orders from thence, but pays him no money.*

Besides the diocesan, a second bishop also resides at Khósrova. Being, according to the laws of Nestorian episcopal succession, heir to the diocese, he resented being supplanted by another, and when Mar Yohanna went to Bagdád for consecration, he obtained the same right from the Nestorian Mar Shimón of the mountains. An excommunication was fulminated against him in consequence, but by going to Bagdád and lining well the pockets of the

* The following was given us, by the nephew of bishop Shevris, of whom more will be said hereafter, as a complete list of the present Chaldean bishops.—Mar Basilius, at Diarbekr. Mar Michael, at Sert. Mar Ignatius, at Mardín. Mar Lorentius, at Ain Kawa, near Bagdád. Mar Yohanna, and Mar Yoosuf, at El Koosh. Mar Yohanna, at Khósrova.—The title *Mar*, which seems to be common to all Chaldean, Nestorian, and Jacobite bishops, is equivalent to *lord*.

pope's vicar there, he got a favorable representation of his case made to Rome, and retained the rank of sub-bishop in this diocese. 'And here he has been,' said Mar Yohanna, our informant, 'for many, many years, and as often as I have said *white*, he has invariably said *black*.' The priest, too, regarded him with extreme contempt, and repeatedly amused himself by calling him *semivirumque bovem*.—There was also, till recently, another Chaldean bishop, by the name of Shevris, in this region, but, I believe, without a diocese. He was a native of Sert, and was consecrated bishop by Mar Elias of El Koosh, without orders from the pope. To effect a compromise for such an irregularity, he went to Rome, in person, and resided there twelve years. 'Then,' said the old bishop, our informant again, 'he came here and connected himself with the Bible Society, from which he received a large annual pension.' He seemed prejudiced against him, and called him '*un matto*;' but still affirmed that he died in the bosom of the papal church. The fact that he was always a firm papist, was declared not only by several Chaldeans and Nestorians, but by a nephew of Shevris himself, who will be mentioned hereafter. The British and Foreign Bible Society employed him to translate the New Testament into the Kürdish language, and the work is now in the hands of the missionaries at Shoosha for revision. An English gentleman at Tebriz, who knew Shevris well, had already expressed to us an apprehension that he had done his work like a hireling. The priest here affirmed that it could be of no use, as he had written it in the Nestorian character, which, besides being entirely unknown to the Kürds, is ill adapted to express the sounds of their language. Undoubtedly, as the Kürds have no alphabet of their own, and are as moslems more or less familiar with the Korán, to say nothing of the languages of the Turks and Persians who surround them, the Arabic alphabet ought to have been used. The

translation, however, will doubtless be worth something as a first attempt, and will be an important help to missionaries who may wish to learn the Kùrdish language. He died at Tebriz of the epidemic, during the last season.

We were hardly seated with the bishop and his priest, before two litigants, with a crowd at their heels, rushed in to plead a cause before the episcopal tribunal. Both were angry and obstinate, and, upheld by their friends, put the reverend judge to his wit's end to pacify them. His consultations with his priest, being held in Italian that they might not be comprehended by the people, were of course understood by us; and the latter, fearing that we might detect some machiavelism, deemed it necessary, in the sequel, to apologize. He said that such were the habits of the people and the nature of moslem law, that to tell the plain truth did no good; quibbles and expedients were necessary. Such a state of things was exceedingly painful to him, but the people must be satisfied, or they would appeal to the Mohammedan authorities.—The inhabitants of the village, he informed us, own the soil they cultivate. Though so hedged in by surrounding villages that their possessions are small, they pay a tax of 1000 tománs (about \$3000) in money, and about half that amount in grain! Nor, though fixed by charters, is this all; through illegal exactions from collectors, and the imposition of unjust fines, they actually give much more. Even mechanics, of whom there are only a few weavers, cannot exercise their trade without paying for a license. In fact, he said, they are drained of every farthing they can earn. That they were extremely poor, their external appearance abundantly testified. Their oppression has increased since the war.—Only some twenty or thirty can read, and they have been taught since the priest came here, that they might assist him in church. Besides the few taught by him, the Chaldeans have no school here or elsewhere, in this region.

We attended evening prayers in the church. It was an old stone structure, ornamented within by a multitude of coarse shawls and Roman pictures hung around its walls, and its interior was extremely dark. Like the common Armenian churches, its floor was strown with sheep-skins and bits of rugs; and each one, as he entered, left his shoes at the door, and placed himself upon one of them. Few were present; the service was read and chanted with great rapidity; and I think I never saw so little reverence, and so much carelessness in divine worship. In form it resembled that of the Nestorians, which will be hereafter described. In fact, all the Nestorian church books are used by the Chaldeans, with scarcely any other alteration than the substitution of the names of papal for those of Nestorian saints, and the expunging of a few sentences that savor of Nestorianism. The priest seemed to think, that, in conformity with the name of his church, its books must in ancient times have been written in the Chaldean character, but confessed that at present it possesses no such books, and only uses the Nestorian character, with now and then an old manuscript in the Estrangelo. Only the scripture lessons in the public services are explained in the vulgar tongue. None of the other parts, according to the confession of the priest, are understood by the people. The Chaldeans not only regulate the time of their fasts and feasts by the oriental calendar, but observe the former with all the strictness of the Nestorians, eating no kind of animal food, and in lent abstaining from every thing until afternoon. Their priests, like those of the papal Greeks and Maronites of Syria, are allowed to marry before ordination, but not after. Like good papists, they receive only the bread at communion.

This is now the only papal mission in Aderbaiján, nor did we learn of any other in all Persia, except at Isfahán.*

* Chardin found two Capuchins at Tebriz; (vol. 2: p. 344,) but their *hospice* has long since ceased to exist.

The priest said that he formerly received from Rome, an annual remittance of a hundred dollars, but for the last two or three years no money had been sent, and he could not even get an answer to his letters. Such neglect provoked from him many bitter complaints; and he declared, that his two brethren at Isfahán had written to him that they were in the same predicament, almost starving for want of money. How curtailed are the finances and the influence of Rome, since the time when Chardin found Augustinians, Capuchins, Carmelites, and Jesuits, living at such ease in the capital of Persia! Let her continue thus to sink elsewhere, and soon will that great city be found no more at all. We seem, throughout this journey, to have been treading upon her ruins; and I confess that one of the most pleasing reflections it has occasioned me, is that we have found so many of them completely buried in the dust. The priest complained that his embarrassment for want of funds deprived him of all energy for his missionary labors. He was anxious to multiply books in the vulgar language, but had yet only translated the *Doctrina Christiana*, (a papal catechism,) and a few prayers, for his pupils. They are the only books that exist in the vulgar language of the Nestorians. We obtained copies of them, and of a Nestoriano-Turkish catechism. He had projected also a work upon the Nestorians, but I apprehend it would be little more than an abridgment of Asseman, whom he owned, and followed closely in the information he gave us. As the result of his labors hitherto, he mentioned the twenty or thirty youth here whom he had taught to read, and the Chaldeans in the villages around who had been converted by him. He was in expectation of a speedy reinforcement from Rome; two young men of the village, whom he had sent thither for education, being about ready to return.

I have already mentioned that one of the heirs to the last waly of Georgia, is supported by the Persian govern-

ment, as a pretender to the throne of that country. He resides in this village, and we called on him after evening prayers. So rejoiced was he to see us, if we may credit his own expressions, that our visit was worth to him more than a hundred thousand tománs; and offers of services, hardly one of which it was in his power to perform, were heaped upon us in such profusion, that we were put to our wit's end for civil excuses to decline them all. It was Persian politeness carried to the most disgusting excess. The kings of Imireti, and the princes of Mingreli, he informed us, were his relatives, and his ancestors were of the Pakradian family. His wekeel added, that the Pakradians were of the royal family and lineage of David, the son of Jesse. He bears the name and title of Alexander khan, and lives upon a pension of about a thousand tománs which he is ordered by government to take from the taxes of this village. Weakness and generosity of character make him too improvident to manage his own income, and among the Georgian dependents who form his court, is an Armenian khan, named Aghalár, a native of Georgia, who acts as his wekeel. We exchanged calls with him also, and afterward learned that he is brother of a eunuch, who now controls the cabinet of Teherán. *He* has no lack of sense, nor of providence, and of course fares better than his master.

March 10. Taking a Chaldean guide from Khósrova, we made an excursion this morning to Old Salmás, now generally called simply *Shehir*, or the city. The plain continued of the same character as was noticed at the first village on entering the district. Level almost as the floor of a house, with a soil of rich light loam, and irrigated throughout with canals, it presented a landscape truly charming. Cotton and rice do not flourish here, and only grain is cultivated; but with that almost every spot was green. Our guide assured us that it produces from eight to twelve,

and in some places fifteen fold. Numerous villages appeared, and all were surrounded, like Khósrova, with forests of fruit trees, which seem to flourish here with almost unequalled exuberance. The apple, pear, quince, peach, apricot, walnut, and siujid, were the principal. Through gardens thickly set with these, we worked our way into Saora, a village on the road. Our guide assured us that five or six hundred families of Armenians had emigrated from it to Georgia, and that only a few of that nation with a few moslems were left. We found the Chaldean church in the keeping of a solitary family of that sect. Its door was a mere elliptical hole cut through a single stone, and so small as to admit one's body with difficulty. Within were three small chapels under the same roof, dark and dirty, and without furniture, except a few old shawls and Romish pictures suspended upon the walls. No books even were to be found, and the keeper said the clergy brought them from Khósrova, when they came to say mass on the great festivals.

Salmás is mentioned by ancient writers, as a town in the Armenian province of Persarmenia.* The modern village is scattered over a considerable space, on the site of the old one. Its houses are poor, and it has an aspect of decay. The only remains of antiquity we saw, were two or three cylindrical monuments, or towers, of an order similar to that at Shamkór, but much inferior in height. They were constructed of brick, and marked with inscriptions in the Arabic character, betraying a moslem origin. The plain extends hardly more than a mile southwestward from the town, and then commence the semi-independent mountains of the Kürds. Though so near that lawless people, however, the district is never disturbed by them, except when the Persian government is in a weak and disorganized state.—The entrance to the Chaldean church

* St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 179.

was like that just mentioned at Saora, and its interior was in a similar state, except that it contained three or four old books, one of which was written in the Estrangelo character upon parchment. There being no Chaldean or Nestorian in town, the key was kept by an old Armenian. Still, the clergy come from Khósrova to say mass in it, upon the great festivals. Among other ancient inscriptions upon the stones in the external face of its walls, we noticed one in a character entirely unknown to us.—We found the Jewish synagogue neater and better carpeted than the churches; and the Jews better dressed than the Christians. Their copies of the law were beautiful, and we tried to purchase one, but in vain. They reckon 30 or 35 families here; in Oormiah they amount to 300 families; and in Khoy, I believe, there are a few; but elsewhere in Aderbaiján we heard of none. In Teherán, Kashán, and Isfahán, they are more numerous. The priest at Khósrova said that these of Salmás are doubtless much oppressed, but less so than his own townsmen; for not being cultivators of the soil, their property is not so tangible. Their appearance seemed to justify his opinion. The Jews of Persia generally are the most ignorant, demoralized and oppressed part of the community. They are said to have neither tradition, nor history, to inform them when their ancestors came into the country. We naturally look among them for the remains of the ten tribes; but if such were their origin, all traces of it have been effaced. They now resemble their brethren elsewhere, except that their reverence for the Talmud is perhaps somewhat less, and there is some doubt whether they have all the books of the Old Testament. This resemblance may have been produced by long intercourse with Jerusalem Rabbies, who often pass by them on their way to the north. We found one at Salmás, at the time of our visit. They speak the languages of the country; but respecting the common use

of a vulgar Hebrew among them, we received contradictory statements.—The Armenian church bore marks of great poverty, and was probably stripped of its furniture and ornaments at the time of the emigration. Upon that occasion, we were assured, 200 families left the town. Only 20 remained, and 40 have since joined them, so that their present number is 60. In the whole district there are now but about 400 families of Armenians. They have no school, nor had they any before the war.

We returned to Khósrova in time to attend a Chaldean wedding. It was a nephew of the priest, with whom he lives, that was married, and we therefore had the best chance of viewing all the ceremonies of the occasion. Our host, both because as a priest he had long endeavored to discountenance the frolickings of his parishioners, and because his nephew was a widower with a family of children, as well as to avoid expense, wished, he said, to have little parade. The friends of the bride prevailed, however, and the wedding took place with some eclat. Yesterday, the bridegroom uncovered a large jar of wine in his yard, (which, according to the manner of keeping wine here, was buried a foot or two in the ground,) and slew a cow also before our door. The whole of the beef, and large quantities of wine, with butter, and rice, were sent to the house of the bride for the wedding feast. The wine was in the greatest demand, and jars were repeatedly filled and sent away, or drunk on the spot, as if it had been water. To stain the hands and feet of the bride, a dish of *hevna*, too, was furnished by the bridegroom. It was applied in the evening by an assembly of women, who had a feast upon the occasion, with music and dancing. The priest would not provide the latter, and the expense of it was borne by the father of the girl. The expense of marrying is here so great, that a contribution is generally taken up for the bridegroom through the village; otherwise few

young men would be able to marry. The nephew of the priest had already once received this favor at his former marriage, however, and he could not solicit it of his townsmen again. But we were not thus excused from the solicitation, and in the course of to-day the bride sent us, by the hand of a maid, a tray of pears and lavender. Its meaning was easily understood, and, hoping thereby to discharge some of our obligations to our host, we put into the hand of the bearer a small coin. It afterward appeared that the purses of the espoused parties were not yet united, and this was only a trick of the girl's father to sponge us of some money.

Late in the afternoon to-day, a company of musicians and dancers carried from the bridegroom to the bride the present of her wedding dress. The bridegroom remained at home; we anticipated the slow movements of the musical procession, and arrived before them. Along the side of a large room were seated upon the ground, in all the mirth of boisterous conviviality, a row of men, with trays of bread and fruit before them, and waiters passing goblets of wine rapidly around. Their noise ceased for a moment as we entered, and they rose respectfully to receive us. In a corner of the same room, was huddled, also upon the ground, a crowd of women. Against the wall were three or four entirely covered with veils, indicating that they had been married within the year. Between them appeared the bride, also with a veil, but without the flat dish that crowned the heads of the married women. Near them sat one or two with unveiled faces, except that the chin was well muffled to the nose, and a red shawl was thrown over their head to show that they were married the year before. The mass of the married dames had likewise the lower part of the visage concealed in a muffler, but a white instead of a red shawl upon the head, betokened that they were matrons of some standing. A complement of unmarried maidens,

having their faces entirely naked, and nothing upon their heads but a tight cap from which dangled an abundance of gold and silver coins, completed the crowd. These were the relatives of the bride.

The relatives of the bridegroom soon came with the wedding dress, and filled the room. The bride was clothed where she sat, but the crowd of women around completely screened her from the gaze of the men. The latter were otherwise employed; for the trays were now loaded with dishes of various kinds of food, which, with large draughts of wine, they hastened to despatch. The uproar, from loud talk, music and quarrelling, soon increased to a deafening and almost fearful height. The bridegroom had given a large dowry, at the espousals; but custom required an additional present, also, at the marriage, to the father, brothers and nearest relations. So exorbitant were their demands on this score to-day, that the priest had already been forced to refer them to court for a decision. Provoked by this, and half drunk with wine, the father was exceedingly waspish, and vented his wrath in words and actions, which we at one time expected would actually end in blows. The dress-maker, too, clamorously demanded her fee, and a present was claimed in high terms by all who had aided in dressing the bride, among whom the girl who had tied her zone made herself the most conspicuous. The bride was at length equipped, and having with many pretended or real tears given the farewell kiss to her parents and relatives, was conducted slowly to the door. There a horse was waiting for her, and as she mounted, an infant boy was seated in her lap upon the saddle, to augur the felicitous result of such an offspring. Then, preceded by music and dancing, and attended by an immense crowd, many of whom were well in their cups, she marched slowly to the house of the bridegroom.

We took a shorter road, and arrived before them. At

the first sign of her coming, the bridegroom, who had remained at home, mounted his terrace with a few of his friends. As she drew near, one held a tray of fruit before him, and another poured goblets of wine down his throat, all shouting at every draught. A lump of butter was brought the bride, which she stuck upon the door-post as she entered, to signify that her coming brought plenty and fruitfulness to the house. The last of the demands made, in accordance with marriage customs here, upon the purse of the poor bridegroom, was now met by a promise to her of a new dress, before she would be seated. The court was immediately filled with a crowd of men and women, who continued dancing by torch light to the sound of music, until a late hour. The wine jar was soon reported to be exhausted, although it had contained about 150 bottles. Another of the same size was soon opened, and when we returned from Oormiah, ten days afterward, that too was empty. Tired of such carousals, we retired to our room and to sleep, leaving a request to be awaked to witness the marriage.

We were called an hour after midnight, and hastened to the church, where it was to take place. The espoused parties came with no attendance. At the altar, the friend of the bridegroom and the bridemaïd stood between them, and during the ceremony repeatedly whispered in the ear of each. They were once brought together for a moment to join hands; but the bride held back so resolutely, that the union was not effected without much persuasion, and even force. When together, they were observed to be more intent upon treading on each other's toes, than upon joining hands; for you must know that whichever had his toes well mashed at that critical moment, was to be obedient to the other through life. A ring was dipped in wine and water by the priest, and given to the bridegroom to be put by him upon the finger of the bride; and the ceremony

was consummated by crowning the head of each with a garland. The communion ought to have been given them before leaving the church, and, as a preparation, they had actually been made to confess during the evening; but the priest declared that after so much drinking and carousing he would not administer it. Two attendants, with a cymbal and a bell, led the way from the church; the priest and deacon followed them, chanting from their books; and thus the married couple were conducted home.

LETTER XX.

O O R M I A H .

Origin of Nestorianism—Its establishment in Persia—Origin and extent of the patriarchate of Seleucia and Ctesiphon—Different residences of its patriarchs—Conversions of the Nestorians to the papal church—Origin of the seceding patriarchate of Mar Shimón in the Kúrdish mountains—Our arrival at Jamálava, a Nestorian village in the province of Oormiah—Nestorian fasts—Evening prayers—Bishop Mar Yohanna—Language of the Nestorians—Adoration of the saints—Prayers for the dead—State of the dead before Christ—Independent Nestorians of Kúrdistán—Diocese of Mar Shimón—Diocese of the bishop of Jamálava—Orders of the Nestorian clergy—Their support—Ideas of the way of salvation—Sign of the cross—Number of the Nestorian sacraments—Baptism—Sacred leaven—Eucharist—Mode of communion—Open communion—Marriage—Consecration of churches—Armenian carnival.

DEAR SIR,

IN passing from the Armenian to the Nestorian church, we go backward one step in the history of heresy. Nestorius was excommunicated at Ephesus, by the third general council, A. D. 431; twenty years before Eutyches was condemned by the fourth general council, at Chalcedon. You will not expect me to review the transactions of that assembly. They form a page in the history of the church, which a sarcastic Gibbon may take pleasure in unfolding for the scorn of her enemies, but which the Christian will not be reluctant to leave veiled in the darkness of the age in which they occurred. That Nestorius was innocent, I am not disposed to contend; but if he was chargeable with guilt, I should search for it elsewhere than did the council. Its first accusation was, that he refused to the virgin the title of *Mother of God*. Had he plead guilty to it, surely

no protestant would for that have charged him with heresy. But he did not, for he said, "I have often declared, that if one more simple among you, or any others, is pleased with this word Θεοτόκος, I have no objection to it, so be that he make not the virgin God."* It accused him next, of holding not only to two natures, but to *two persons* in Christ. And even had he used such language, no one accustomed to discriminate, will deny, that it *might* have had in his mouth no heretical meaning. But he perseveringly denied the charge to the end of his life. To Cyril, his enemy, he wrote, "I approve that you preach a distinction of natures in respect to the divinity and humanity, and a conjunction of them in one person." And to another prelate he said, "Of the two natures there is one authority, one virtue, one power, and one person according to one dignity."† Nestorius had on the one point, however, in attempting to penetrate beyond the reach of finite powers into the mystery of the incarnation, darkened counsel by words without knowledge; and on the other, had boldly, and perhaps honestly, endeavored to correct a popular superstition. The opportunity for humbling the occupant of the see of Constantinople, which had begun to eclipse its sister patriarchates, was too good to be lost; and the envious Cyril of Alexandria delayed not to sound the alarm of heresy. By refusing to wait for the delegates of Antioch, (the friends of the accused,) he converted the council of Ephesus into an *ex parte* tribunal, and Nestorius was condemned unheard.

On being cut off from the church, and hurled from the patriarchal throne of Constantinople, Nestorius was first banished to Arabia Petræa; thence, after a four years' residence near Antioch, he was transported to one of the Oases of Libya; and finally died in Upper Egypt. But his cause was the cause of his countrymen in the East, and needed not his presence to secure its progress. Others besides himself

* *Assem. Bib. Orient.* vol. 4: p. 193.

† *Ibid.* p. 192.

had there sat at the feet of Diodorus of Tarsus, and Theodorus of Mopsuestia; and John, patriarch of Antioch, both from partiality to the same opinions, and from chagrin at the neglect shown him by his brother of Alexandria at the council of Ephesus, looked with complacency upon the feelings of his flock. Particularly in the famous school of Edessa, (now Orfah,) where many Christian youth of Persia were educated, was the part of the condemned patriarch warmly espoused. His partisans were indeed expelled from it before the declaration of peace between the sees of Antioch and Alexandria, and the school itself was finally destroyed in A. D. 489, by order of the emperor Zeno. But Ibas, then a presbyter in Edessa, in the meantime excited by his correspondence an interest in the cause among the Persian ecclesiastics; the expelled pupils carried with them to the country of their birth and of their banishment a still warmer personal sympathy in it; and Barsumas, one of their number, added his influence, both as head of his rival school of Nisibis and as bishop of that city, to promote it. It was also fostered by the rivalry of the governments of Constantinople, and of Persia. For, while the orthodox Theodosius, and the monophysite Zeno strove alike to exterminate Nestorianism from their realm, Barsumas easily convinced the fire-worshipper Firóz, that the persecuted sect would be favorable to his interests, and that the friends of orthodoxy were at heart traitors to his government. The archbishop of Seleucia, either from fear or indifference, stood aloof from the manœuvres of the bishop, and at his death the new sect had so multiplied in his diocese, as to appoint (in A. D. 498) his successor. Thus the Nestorians assumed the attitude of the dominant Christian sect of Persia.*

The archbishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon has been already mentioned, as one of the Catholicoses beyond the

* *Assem. Bib. Orient.* vol. 4: p. 67, ss.

boundaries of the Greek empire, who originally acknowledged the supremacy of the patriarch of Antioch. The Christians of that diocese claimed Thomas as their apostle, inasmuch as he passed by them on his way to the remoter regions of the east. But their see owed its origin to Maris, a disciple of the Thaddeus to whom the church of Edessa looked up as its founder.* In A. D. 162, long before the diocese was infected with Nestorianism, its occupants had ceased to go for consecration to Antioch, where they were liable to be seized as spies, and had practised receiving the ordinance from the hands of their own bishops.† And when the infection of heresy had completely severed their still nominal connection with that patriarchal see, they assumed to themselves the title of Patriarch of the East, as well as the power of spiritually independent heads of the Nestorian church.—The Nestorians did not receive from all the Sassanians such decided protection as from Firóz, and were occasionally persecuted; but even under the religious intolerance of Nooshirwán, their patriarch was the acknowledged head of all the Christians of Persia.‡ Under the Arabians, too, though liable like all Christians to excessive exactions and repeated persecutions, they were admitted to many offices of trust, and had the precedence of every other body of Christians.§

Their sect was now widely extended. Besides occupying, almost to the exclusion of all other Christians, the region which forms the modern kingdom of Persia; they were on the one side numerous in Mesopotamia and Arabia, had their metropolitans in Syria and Cyprus, and a bishop even in the island of Socotra, at the mouth of the Red sea; and on the other, the Syrian Christians of Malabar in Hindoostán were Nestorians, and received their

* *Assem. Bib. Orient.* vol. 4: p. 3. vol. 3: p. 611.

† *Ibid.* vol. 3: p. 612. vol. 4: p. 41. ‡ *Ibid.* vol. 4: p. 87, ss.

§ *Ibid.* vol. 4: p. 95.

bishops from Seleucia. Nestorian churches existed in Transoxiana as far as Kashgar; in the distant regions of Mongolia, the great khan of the Tartars held the rank of presbyter in the Nestorian church; and, if we may credit a monument subsequently discovered by papal priests, Nestorian missionaries planted churches in the heart of northern China.* In a word, we have on record a list of no less than twenty-five metropolitans, who acknowledged the supremacy of the Nestorian patriarch.†—Their condition was at first improved by the exchange of Saracen for Moghúl masters, at the destruction of the kalifate of Bagdad by Hoolakoo khan, A. D. 1258. For, though the house of Chingiz rose upon the ruins of that of *Prester John* (presbyter Unkh khan), the clerical khan of the Tartars, it was brought, by intermarriages with it, under the influence of its religion. Some of the descendants of the Chingiz openly declared themselves Christians; all were for several generations partial to Christianity; and the branch which invaded Persia showed peculiar respect to the head of the Nestorian church. It learned to persecute, however, on embracing the Mohammedan faith; a similar spirit was imbibed by the Moghúls wherever its example was followed; and at length Timoor completed the banishment of Christianity from Transoxiana, exterminated or effectually concealed it in Mongolia, and persecuted unto death multitudes of the Nestorians of Persia.‡

The original residence of the Nestorian patriarchs was at Ctesiphon and Seleucia. When Bagdad became the capital of the Saracen empire, in A. D. 762, they removed thither. The destruction of the court whose favor they there cultivated, broke the tie which connected them with that city, and thenceforward their residence seems to have been constantly varying, until the patriarch Elias, in A. D.

* Assem. Bib. Orient. vol. 4: p. 413, ss. † Ibid. vol. 2: p. 458.

‡ Ibid. vol. 4: p. 101, 481.

1559, fixed himself at Mosul. His successors have ever since resided in that vicinity, and have also borne his name; and a *Mar Elias* now represents, at El Koosh, the ancient patriarchs of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.*—The modern history of the Nestorians is taken up with the efforts of papal missionaries to convert them to the Romish faith. The few that lived in Cyprus were gained over as early as A. D. 1445.† In A. D. 1599, the Jesuits forced those of Malabar to acknowledge the pope, and expunged from their church books all anti-papal doctrines.‡ During the seventeenth century Capuchin and Carmelite monks overran Mesopotamia from Diarbekr to Bussorah, and scattered widely the seeds of papacy.§ The defection of the metropolitan of Diarbekr from the Nestorian faith, and the consequent establishment of the modern papal sect and patriarchate of the Chaldeans during that century, has been already mentioned. Mar Elias, the Nestorian patriarch himself, was also gained over, and in A. D. 1616 sent in his submission to the pope.|| His successors, however, seem to have regulated their obedience by their convenience, and the books of their church have not, so far as we have learned, ever been expurgated by papal censors.

A more serious defection than that of the see of Diarbekr took place in the sixteenth century. Not only had the patriarchate then remained, for nearly a century, hereditary in the same family, but the incumbents would raise none but their relatives to the office of metropolitan. Hence it happened, that when the old patriarch died in A. D. 1551, only one Metropolitan was left in the church, and he, being his brother's son, was heir to his office. Unwilling to tolerate

* Assem. Bib. Orient. vol. 4: p. 622. † Ibid. vol. 4: p. 141.

‡ For a valuable account of those iniquitous proceedings, and of Nestorianism in India, see *L'Histoire du Christianisme des Indes*. By M. V. La Croze.

§ Assem. Bib. Orient. vol. 4: p. 169. || Ibid. 4: p. 169. vol. 1: p. 543.

any longer such a system of hereditary ecclesiastical aristocracy, an assembly of the clergy and laity met in the city of Mosul, and selected another ecclesiastic, by the name of Sulaka, to succeed to the patriarchate. His consecration, however, exceedingly embarrassed them, for according to their customs the ceremony could be performed only by three or four metropolitans, whereas only one officer of that rank existed in the church, and he had declared himself patriarch. It was determined to seek the performance of the rite from the highest authority, and Sulaka was sent to the successor of St. Peter at Rome, where, after giving in a satisfactory confession of his faith, he was proclaimed patriarch, in April A. D. 1553. Only his immediate successor received consecration at Rome, where he subscribed the decrees of the council of Trent, and we hear of no correspondence between this see and the pope later than A. D. 1653. The fourth in succession from Sulaka was Simeon, archbishop of Jeloo, Sert and Salmás. Since his time, the capital of the see has remained in the mountains of Kürdistán, to the west of Oormiah, and its occupants have always borne the name of Simeon, or, with the native title and pronounciation, *Mar Shimón*.*

It was a part of the flock of this patriarch, that we visited in our journey to Oormiah, and which I am now about to introduce to you. I shall give you merely our own inquiries, and leave you to compare them with what La Croze and Asseman have written of the same sect. Instead of pursuing the plan of general classification adopted in presenting our information respecting the Armenians, where our survey was more extensive; it is deemed safer here, considering the shortness of our visit to the Nestorians, to relate separately the conversations of each individual informant. Such a course will necessarily exhibit some repetitions and contradictions; but it will have the advan-

* Assem. Bib. Orient. vol. 1: p. 523, 536. vol. 3: p. 621. vol. 4: p. 164.

tage of referring every fact to its proper authority, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions, and throwing upon the writer merely the responsibility of faithfully narrating what we saw and heard. The whole is the result of nine days' investigation.

We left Salmás for Oormiah in the morning on the 11th of March. A projection of the mountains of Kürdistán, extending in the form of a small promontory into the lake, separates the two provinces. As we began to ascend it, a small quarry of marble attracted our attention. It was translucent and veined, like that which is so abundant at Marágha, and strongly resembled alabaster. It had evidently been deposited, in successive incrustations, from water. We found three villages and a few fields of grain on the mountains, and in some places snow was lying in our path. On the farther side, a narrow plain, opening at the south into the plain of Oormiah, lies between the mountain and the lake. We descended into it, and found a number of little villages at its northern extremity, in several of which there are a few Nestorians. We selected Jamálava, 4 fúrsakhs from Khósrova, for its being the residence of a Nestorian bishop. The bishop was absent, but a priest received us hospitably, and gave us the choice of a room in his house, or a stable. We preferred the latter; and it was soon filled with friendly Nestorians, eager to see and converse with us. Our own gratification was great, at finding ourselves at last surrounded by the people, to whom we had looked forward with the liveliest interest from the moment of leaving Malta, nor were we less eager than they to converse.

It being Friday, we first questioned the priest respecting the fasts of his church. In conjunction with the others who were present, he informed us that they fast every Wednesday and Friday; twenty five days before Christmas; fifteen days before the feast of St. Mary; three days before the feast of the cross, which occurs twelve days

after Christmas; three days before the feast of St. John; three days before the feast of *Khoodera neby* (St. George); fifty days before Easter, including Easter Sunday when they eat meat; and fifty days before Pentecost, the observance of which is optional and not regarded by all. We asked, as he finished the list, if there were no more; and he jocosely replied, 'Why, are not these enough? what of the year remains for us to eat?' But the bishop afterward mentioned another fast of three days, named after the prophet Jonah, during which they remain in the church from morning to night, weeping, praying and fasting. It is not, like the rest, followed by a festival. In none of their fasts do they eat any animal substance whatever, and in lent, with the exception of Sundays and festivals, they eat but twice, once after midday and once after evening prayers, and some eat only the latter meal. On the Sundays and festivals of lent, and on the common fasts, whoever chooses is at liberty to eat in the morning. The priest assured us, that for the fasts of Wednesday and Friday, they cease to eat meat from the time of evening prayers on the days preceding until the same hour on those days themselves; and that for the Sabbath, labor is suspended from evening prayers (or about sunset) on Saturday, till daylight (or morning prayers) on Monday. His statement was afterward confirmed by the bishop. In fact, it is well known, that, for all religious purposes, the Nestorians always consider the day to begin at sunset. The bishop added, that they abstain from labor on their festivals generally; but the Sabbath, they know to be God's day, and esteem it more sacred than any other.

They informed us, that throughout the year, except in lent, there are services in the church only morning and evening; but that during lent, a third service at 11 A. M. is added, unless the Sabbath or a festival occur, when even then there are but two. As we were conversing, the

priest was called to evening prayers by the clattering of a board suspended near the church instead of a bell, and we followed him. The bishop had now returned, and after washing his hands at a rivulet, he led us into the church. The people took off their shoes as they entered, and stood upon a few mats that covered the ground, the only floor of the building. Before taking his place, however, each one kissed a cross that lay upon a book on a reading desk, and then the back of the bishop's hand who stood by its side. This was done even after worship commenced, so that in the midst of a prayer the bishop had repeatedly to put out his hand to be kissed. The bishop, priest and deacons, each had distinct parts in the services; which consisted of prayers, chants and responses, performed with almost no ceremonies, and having an air of great simplicity. All the officiators wore nothing but their ordinary dress; and no incense was used. The people often joined in the responses; uncovered their heads two or three times, at particular parts; repeatedly crossed themselves; and prostrating kissed the earth like the Armenians, and once all kneeled for some time, as if in private prayer. At the close, the bishop blessed them, and they again kissed his hand. With the simplicity of their forms we were pleased, but were sorry to observe much evidence that their worship had no spirituality.

The church was a small, dark, vaulted room, entirely destitute of pictures or any kind of ornaments, except coarse shawls which covered the reading desks. These were two blocks of stone on either side of the entrance to the sanctuary, and supported the books from which service was read. Between them and the sanctuary was a narrow space extending from side to side of the building, and enclosed by a wall four or five feet high. The sanctuary itself seemed half as large as the church, and was connected with it by a single door. Opposite the door, on the farther side

of it, stood the altar, a plain block stone. The bishop conducted us into the baptistery, a small room on the left of the sanctuary, and connected with the church by a distinct door. After looking a moment at a plain stone trough, which served for a baptismal font, I observed that a door conducted into the sanctuary, and was about to enter. But the bishop commanded me, in an authoritative tone, to stop. I told him that I too was a priest; but he replied, that that place can be entered only by fasting, and betrayed by his manner such earnestness, that I desisted. The church, as well as an outer court, was entered by a door but just large enough to allow our bodies to pass, being hardly more than two feet high, and narrow in proportion. After creeping out of them, we inquired the reason of their smallness. The bishop replied, 'Is it not written, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the the way?"' We had observed a similar peculiarity in the Chaldean churches of Salmás, and had been told that its object was to prevent moslems from introducing their horses. It was observed to be common to the Nestorian churches of Oormiah, and we never heard it satisfactorily explained.

The bishop with most of his flock, followed us to our stable, and remained, readily answering our questions and keeping up a friendly conversation, until late. His name was Yohanna. He was a sensible man, about thirty years of age, and son of the priest already mentioned. His uncle was bishop before him; and the office, among the Nestorians, is always hereditary, from uncle to nephew. A bishop himself is never allowed to marry, nor may he, from the day of his birth, eat any other animal food than eggs and the productions of the dairy.

We had anticipated some difficulty, in conversing with the Nestorians, for want of an interpreter. But Providence furnished us with an excellent one at Jamálava, and elsewhere we were able to converse with them through the

Turkish, with the addition of now and then a religious technical term from the Armenian, which language they also partially understood. Our interpreter here was a nephew of the deceased bishop Shevris. He was a native of Mardín in Mesopotamia, had lived nine years a monk in the convent of El Koosh, and held the rank of deacon in the Chaldean church. He spoke Arabic fluently, and that was the language in which he conversed with me. With the Nestorians, he spoke in their own dialect, which was also his native tongue. We had first heard this language at Khósrova, and it proved to be the domestic dialect of both the Chaldeans and the Nestorians, though all knew likewise something of Turkish. In roughness of sound, it exceeded even the Armenian. I was able soon to detect in it many Arabic and Hebrew words, but rarely enough to complete the meaning of a sentence. Almost every word seemed to end in a vowel. It is in fact a vulgar Syriac, and the deacon testified, that it differs not at all from the dialect now spoken by the Jacobites of Mesopotamia. Their church books show the original language of which it is a corruption, and they are in Syriac. The character indeed, in which they are written, is peculiar, being but slightly varied from the Estangelo. Many of their oldest books are, in fact, fine specimens of that ancient Syriac alphabet. We procured a copy of the Nestorian alphabet, with the sounds of the letters exemplified. It has not, to our knowledge, ever been printed, and we found none but manuscript books among them. Aside from the character, their church books are in good Syriac. The Chaldean priest at Khósrova showed us a beautiful copy of the Pentateuch, which he had had transcribed into the Nestorian character from the Syriac of Walton's Polyglott, and he assured us that the language is exactly the same as that of their books. All testified unanimously, that this language is not now understood without the instructions of

a master, and of course that the church services are not comprehended by the common people. That the vulgar dialect differs not much from it, however, will be evident from various facts hereafter to be exhibited. The bishop and priest this evening were evidently men of the slightest education, having little more than a knowledge of letters. And yet, when we produced a copy of the British and Foreign Bible Society's edition of the Syriac New Testament, which we had brought from Tebriz, they set to reading it without difficulty, and declared that they understood it. They might indeed have been previously familiar with the character, for they called it *Yakóby* at first sight, and we found among their own books a copy of the Pentateuch in the same. But we tested their knowledge of the language, by making them translate several passages, and they did it without difficulty. They affirmed that it differed not at all from that of their church books.*

Our conversation with the bishop naturally turned upon the services which we had just attended; and we expressed our pleasure at observing no images or pictures in the church. 'Is it not written by the Psalmist,' said he, "'eyes have they but they see not, they have ears but they hear not, neither is there any breath in their mouths?'" We ad-

* The bishop gave us, on another occasion, the following list of the principal books used in the services of the Nestorian church; but I am not without suspicions, that it contains some errors.—*David*, or the Psalter, read at every service. *Akdám Dooatha*, alternate prayers for every day in the week, containing the names of different saints and martyrs. *Keshkool*, containing prayers for every day in the year. *Khoodera*, containing prayers for the Lord's day, and other festivals in the year, and for every day in lent. *Gezza*, containing prayers for the festivals not in lent. *Takhsa*, or the Missal, containing the communion, ordination, baptismal and other similar services. *Werde*, containing legends of the saints, and read only in the three days of the fast of Jonah. *Ahdelta*, or the Gospel, read always at the communion, on the Lord's days and festivals, and in lent, but at no other time. *Shleeha*, or the Epistles, read like the preceding. None of the Old Testament, except the Psalter, is read in church.

ded the second commandment to this appropriate quotation, and they all seemed gratified at our agreement upon so important a point. He confessed that they pray to the saints, however, and regard them as mediators. We repeated the language of Paul, that there is 'one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;' but he seemed not to feel its force, because, as I thought, neither the deacon, who interpreted, nor himself understood the word *mediator*. The former, I soon learned, had no distinct idea of the Arabic term *waseet*, which I used; and when a copy of the Epistles was afterward brought from the church, it proved that the bishop was equally unacquainted with the Syriac term for the same thing. When inquiring the contents of their church books on a subsequent evening, we repeatedly asked if prayers are addressed to the saints whose names are contained in them, and were uniformly answered that they are not, but to God that he would enable his worshipers to imitate them.—The bishop declared that they call not the Virgin, *mother of God*, but *mother of Christ*. Still they believe in her virginity, he said, both before and after the birth of our Savior. Respecting Nestorius, he contradicted himself flatly within a few minutes; first denying that they regard him as a saint, or pray to him, and then confessing that they do both. The mention of the founder of their sect introduced quite a dispute between him and the deacon, on the comparative merits of Nestorius and Cyril, and he produced the Werde to read to us a long legend respecting them.—He constantly affirmed that their name is not derived from Nestorius, but from Nazareth the town of Mary, and I doubt not that he was correct. For they always call themselves, and are known among their neighbors of other sects, by the name *Nusrány*, which is the very word commonly used in Arabic to designate all Christians, and is generally regarded as equivalent to Nazarene. Indeed

they seemed to feel that it is a generic term, and sometimes added *Siriány* to make it distinctive of their sect; which was equivalent to calling themselves *Syrian Christians*. Their countrymen of the monophysite church, they called *Yakóby*. There are none of that sect on this side of the Kürdish mountains.

The bishop allowed that they say prayers and masses for the dead. Still he resolutely denied the existence of more than two places for departed spirits, and seemed inclined to laugh at the fires of the papal purgatory. He clearly declared, also, that here is no change of place from misery to happiness for the dead. We asked him of what use our prayers can be to them. He replied, 'What then, shall we stop praying?' 'No,' said we, 'pray for ourselves, and others upon the earth; for such we are commanded to pray; but stop praying for the dead, it can do them no good.' He replied, that God would have spared Sodom for the sake of fifty, forty, &c. just persons; and perhaps among those who assemble to pray over the dead, an equal number of just persons may be found, for whose sake God will pardon the dead and receive them to happiness. He seemed to have some idea of the unscriptural distinction between mortal and venial sins; for he said, that there are some which condemn the soul to hell, while others are too small to be followed by such a consequence. Respecting the soul between death and the judgment, he declared, in another connection, that it goes neither to heaven nor to hell, but if wicked; it is in a state of torment, and if righteous, in a state of enjoyment. At the judgment, all will be clothed again with the body, the just will be taken to heaven with Christ, and the wicked will be sent to hell. 'Will they remain in hell forever?' we asked. 'Yes,' said he, 'forever and ever.' We could not learn from him, that any other rule than the wishes of relatives decides when, or how often, masses shall be said for the deceased. * If

they choose, no mass is said at all, and the priest is merely requested to repeat a prayer. Even this, also, is omitted at their option. In speaking of the masses, he said, that after them the relatives go home from the church to eat the feast of the mass, and we asked if they have the custom of making sacrifices. He replied, that Christ had abolished the institution of sacrifices, so that since his death none can be offered; yet they sometimes slay an animal as a good work. The ceremony is not necessarily done at a church, nor on any special days, nor are prayers said over the victim. The deacon who interpreted was dissatisfied with this statement, and said; 'I will explain to you the matter. Whenever a person has a headache, or other complaint, he vows to make an offering to this or that saint, as a good work. An animal is sent to the church of the saint to be sacrificed, and a feast is made of its flesh, or it is distributed to the poor, according to the wish of the offerer.' The bishop tacitly assented to the explanation, by asking if we do not likewise offer sacrifices to remove pains and sickness.

We inquired where the souls of the dead were before the coming of Christ. He replied, that the good were not in paradise itself, but in a state of enjoyment around paradise; and the wicked were not in hell itself, but in a state of misery.—*We*. Did Christ change their condition at his death?—*Bish*. He took them to heaven.—*We*. Both the righteous and the wicked? or the righteous only?—*Bish*. All except four persons, viz. Jezebel, Herod, Herodias, and her daughter. What is your own belief?—*We*. We believe that the souls of the righteous went to heaven, and those of the wicked to hell, at their death; and that none of the latter were delivered from their torments at the death of Christ.—*Bish*. But it is written, that Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The righteous are saved as a matter of course; and if he

did not deliver the wicked, of what use was his death?—*We.* Why, in the first place, none are so righteous as to have no sin, for it is written, “There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” In the second place, he did save the wicked, for some, while in this world, repented of their sins, were converted, and obtained forgiveness on his account. The souls of such, and of such only went to heaven at their death.—*Bish.* If so, perhaps only a few hundreds were saved from all the generations that preceded Christ; for very small was the number of those that were good in this world.—*We.* Their number is unknown to us. Elijah thought that he was the only worshiper of the true God among the Israelites of his day; but God told him there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

March 12. We called upon the bishop in the afternoon, and resumed our conversation. He confirmed what we had previously learned, that his patriarch, Mar Shimón, resides at Kochannes, and claims the title of Patriarch of the East. Kochannes, according to the declaration of a man at Khósrova who had been there, is not more than an hour from Joolamérk; but the priest at that place said the distance was four fúrsakhs. The latter informed us that the patriarchate, like what has already been said of the episcopate, is hereditary from uncle to nephew. The succession is not regulated by seniority, but by the wishes and arrangement of the family. The diet of the patriarch is more strictly guarded than even that of the bishops, for not only is he forbidden to taste meat from his birth, but his mother also is allowed to eat none, while he derives his nutriment from her.

The Hakáry country, in the centre of which the patriarch resides, and of which Joolamérk is the capital, is the heart of Kúrdistán, and consists of almost inaccessible mountains. The Nestorians who inhabit it are called

Ashiret, a term which the bishop to-day explained as meaning a people who do not pay tribute. They are in fact, he said, independent, and not only pay no tribute themselves, but exact tribute from the Kürds who live among them. The temporal power is in the hands of distinct meliks, but they all acknowledge the authority of the patriarch. He estimated their number at 50,000 families.—The Chaldean priest at Khósrova said, that the independent districts are deep valleys shut in by the almost impassable mountains of Kürdistán. Each has its own melik or meliks, who acknowledge subjection to no common head. They are elected for life, by the the popular voice irregularly expressed, and the office is often, but not always, hereditary in the same family. The patriarch is clothed properly with only spiritual power, and has no army at his command, except as he may have influence enough, on an emergency, to call one or more of the meliks to his aid. The mountains, he said, barely afford them a sustenance, and they are all miserably poor. To complete the diocese of Mar Shimón, we must add other districts in the same mountains subject to the Kürds, and also Salmás and Oormiah under the Persian government. The whole contains, according to an estimated census give us by the same priest at Khósrova, in company with a Chaldean of his village who had travelled through the independent districts, a Nestorian population of 14,054 families, or about 70,000 souls.*—The acting English ambassador at Tebriz judged

* The following is his estimate in detail.

	No. of families.
Salmás, - - - - -	4
Oormiah, including Térgaver and Mérgaver, mountainous districts of the province occupied by Kürds, - - -	4000
Gárvar, Somai, and Chára, small districts of the mountains adja- cent to Salmás, and occupied by Kürds, - - -	150
Albágh, a district not far from Salmás in the direction of Joola- mérk, and subject to the Kürds, - - -	100

this estimate to be much too small, and declared that a year or two ago he saw a letter from Mar Shimón, stating that he had 40,000 families under him in the Hak-áry county. But, the fact that one of his predecessors, in writing to the pope as long ago as 1653, made the same statement of the population of his diocese, leads me to suspect that it is no more than a hereditary estimate.* Capt. Campbell assured us, also, that the Nestorians are by far the most powerful people of Hakáry, that they are much feared by the Kürds, and will perhaps, before many years, be left by them in undivided possession of the country. He entertained a high opinion of their character.

The priest at Khósrova informed us, that the Nestorians of Oormiah did not join the party of Mar Shimón at its first secession from the see of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, and continued until lately to acknowledge the patriarchal authority of Mar Elias of El Koosh. The occasion of their finally leaving him, was his conversion to papacy; which occurred, according to the estimate of the priest, nearly a hundred years ago, but the bishop of Jamálava placed it back only forty years. The deacon, our interpreter, had left his convent only a year and a half ago, and added the fact of his own staunch papacy to his positive declaration, as proof that both Mar Elias and the convent, as well as

Mahmoodíeh, a district between Sahnás and the lake of Van, included in the pashalik of Van, but occupied by Kürds,	-	300
Waltoo, a district beyond Joolamérk, and subject to the Kürds,	-	800
Diss, an independent Nestorian district,	- - -	500
Jéloo, " " " " - - -	-	1000
Tkhooby, " " " " - - -	-	500
Tiary, " " " " - - -	-	6000
Bass, " " " " - - -	-	500
Bérwer, " " " " - - -	-	200
		14,054
Total,		14,054

In Marágha, Tebriz, Günieh, and Khoy, there are now no Nestorians.

* Assem. Bib. Orient. vol. 3: p. 622.

most of the Nestorians of those parts, are now united to the church of Rome. He said that the convent of El Koosh contains 110 monks. The principal agent of the pope in those parts is a European bishop at Bagdád. Being likewise French consul for that city, he contrives to make his influence extensively felt. From what we heard of him at Khósrova, and from the deacon, we inferred that he is particularly active in procuring the conversion of the Nestorians.—We questioned the bishop of Jamálava, to ascertain if he was aware of the existence of any relics of the Nestorian church in eastern Asia. He was quite confident that there are some in India, but he knew of none in the direction of China. His patriarch, he assured us, sent four bishops many years ago to the East, but nothing had been heard from them.

From the diocese of Mar Shimón, the patriarch, let us turn to that of Mar Yohanna, the bishop of Jamálava. He informed us, that the Nestorians of this village are only twenty-two families in number. Six of them are from Salmás, and the rest have recently assembled here from neighboring villages. He is himself from Gooleeza in Salmás. Respecting the Nestorians of that province, he contradicted the estimate of the priest at Khósrova, and said that instead of four, they amount to twenty-two families. His diocese consists of twelve villages, eight of which are in Oormiah, and the rest in Tégaver, a mountainous district just back of Jamálava to the west. In this village there is no school, nor can any read, except himself, his father and two brothers; but in two others some children are taught by the priests. He confessed that none of the Nestorian females are taught letters. ‘You,’ said he, ‘can attend to such things, but we, both men and women, are obliged to labor with all our might to get money for the moslems. Even if a boy sits down to read, a moslem comes up before he is aware, and with a blow upon his neck, says, ‘Give

us money.' Seeing us smile at his remark, he seemed grieved, and exclaimed with more earnestness; 'Why do you leave us thus? we are your brethren; it is your duty to come and deliver us from this yoke of bondage.' He contended that no people in the world are so fond of learning as the Nestorians, but intimated that none except candidates for the clerical profession, actually receive any education. Of such, there were twelve in his diocese already instructed, and would be admitted to deacon's orders in a few days. Forty-two others were candidates; besides fifteen more, who were studying, and might be ordained hereafter, if they became good. His diocese is now served, he said, by fourteen priests and eleven deacons.

The bishop was curious to know how many orders of the clergy we have, and on learning that we acknowledge only priests and deacons, was unable to imagine how they could be ordained without bishops. But he made no objection to our explanation of the system of presbyterian ordination. Their own clerical orders, he said, are nine, and he seemed to attach much importance to the number. The following is his account of them.—The first, *karooya*, or reader, lights the candles and performs other menial services in the church.—The second, *hoopodyákono*, or sub-deacon, is also a servant of the church for sweeping it and the like.—The third, *shemmásha*, or deacon, aids the priest to celebrate the eucharist, but does not read the gospel on that occasion, as is practised by other sects.—The fourth, *kasha* [*kasheesha*], or priest, says mass, but cannot confer ordination. All his own priests, he affirmed, understand the language of their church books, and preach every day, as he will ordain no other. But his ideas of preaching seemed not very high, and we could not ascertain that he meant any thing more, than that the lesson of the day, and perhaps some other part of the service, is explained in the vulgar tongue. He

declared too that none who have not attained the age of twenty-five, can be admitted to priest's orders. But on being contradicted by the company, he allowed that if a youth has a mature mind, and a worthy character, and is acceptable to his village, he may be ordained as early as fifteen.—The fifth, *arkidyákono*, or archdeacon, holds a relation to the bishop, similar to that of the deacon to the priest. As a priest cannot say mass without a deacon, so a bishop cannot perform an ordination, nor consecrate a church, without an archdeacon. Marriage is allowable to all in the five grades now enumerated, not only before ordination, but as often as their wives die afterward. They thereby, however, become forever ineligible to the office of bishop.—The sixth, *khálfa* [*episkópa*], or bishop, ordains the five lower grades, and consecrates churches. He must pass through all the grades below him, but may be admitted to the first four successively in one day, and on another day to the fifth and sixth. Our informant was no more consistent in telling us the age requisite for admission to the episcopate, than in reference to the priesthood. For he assured us that the candidate must be thirty-two years old, and afterward confessed that he was himself now only in his thirtieth or thirty-first year, and had been ordained five years. The priest at Khósrova said the Nestorians sometimes ordain bishops only six years of age, and the deacon, our interpreter to-day, affirmed that he had seen them as young as thirteen. Their common episcopal address, *aboona* (our father), must seem not a little misplaced when given to such young ecclesiastics; and it was hardly less amusing to hear the priest at Jamálava, constantly apply the same title to the bishop, his son.—The seventh, *matrán* [*metrapoleeta*], is higher than the bishops, and receives from them a visit of homage three times a year.—The eighth and ninth, *katoleeka* and *patriárka*, or catholicos and patriarch, ordain bishops and matrás. He affirm-

ed that they are offices held by two different individuals, but found so much difficulty in making it out, on being cross-questioned, that we imagined them to be merely different titles of the same person. Oil is used only in ordaining the patriarch.—He informed us that in the district of Jéloo there are some Nestorian convents. The monks, though forbidden to marry while they profess monasticism, are allowed, he said, to leave their convents, if they dislike them, and take to themselves wives.

The contributions received by the patriarch from his flock, if we may believe the bishop, are not fixed by any rule, but their voluntary liberality. He never comes to this province in person to collect them, being afraid to leave his mountain fastnesses, but sends his brother once in two or three years. He was here, and also at Khósrova, but a few days before our visit.—The income of the bishop is derived chiefly from a tax of two *sháhies* (about 3 cts.) upon every individual in his diocese; and a fee of one *reál* (about 35 cts.) for every wedding. He receives also, sometimes, a voluntary contribution for masses for the dead. For ordination, Mar Yohanna positively denied, at first, that any thing is paid, but, being pressed by the deacon, he at last said, that, as it is commanded, “Freely ye have received freely give,” no particular sum is exacted by law, but different amounts are given by different candidates.—The income of the priests is exceedingly small, and most of their support is derived from laboring like other men. In time of harvest, each parishioner gives them a day’s labor at reaping, or, if they have no crop of their own, a winnowing fan full of grain. For every marriage they receive a *reál*; and for baptisms, burials, and masses and prayers for the dead, a voluntary fee. But for communicants to contribute any thing to the officiating priest at communion, is a thing, he said, not allowed and entirely unknown.

Wishing to know if the Nestorians have any idea of the doctrines of evangelical religion, we inquired of the bishop the object of Christ's death. He began his reply by saying, that God created man and placed him in Paradise. The angels were then ordered to worship him. But a part, unwilling to worship an inferior who was created after themselves, disobeyed and became devils. We were pained to hear this fable of the Korán from the mouth of a Christian bishop, and reminded him that the salvation of men, and not the fall of the angels, was the object of our question. He repeated that God created man and he fell. The Father then said, he has sinned and must be punished. But the Son said, I will save him; and so he died to save us from punishment, from Satan, and from sin. We inquired if he saved us from original sin only, or likewise from sins of our own commission.—*Bish.* He indeed saved us, but if we continue to sin, his death, though we may be baptized and be called Christians, will do us no good.—*We.* But all men do continue to sin. How are they to obtain pardon? —*Bish.* By fasting, by sincere hearty repentance, and by confession to God, promising at the same time to sin no more.—*We.* If we are to obtain pardon for our sins thus, then Christ saved us from original sin only.—*Bish.* We are saved by Christ; but how? We must obey his commands, must fast, commune, repent sincerely, confess to God, and the like.—We varied our question in different ways, to learn if he entertained the common idea, that original sin is cancelled by the death of Christ, and actual sin by our own good works. But, though he expressly acknowledged the doctrine of original sin, we could not find that he made this distinction, or had any clear idea that all or even any sin is pardoned solely through the death of Christ. He laid much stress upon sincerity of repentance and consistent Christian conduct.

We changed the subject by saying, you have told us

what the Father and the Son have done for man, will you tell us now the work of the Spirit?—*Bish.* He descended upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost; he descended too upon Christ at his baptism; and in like manner he descends now upon all men when they are baptized.—*We.* Does he do nothing for us after baptism?—*Bish.* Most certainly, he is always with us and does every thing for us.—*We* asked him, if no instance ever occurred among them of wicked men's becoming correct in their conduct and good Christians through his influences, in order to ascertain whether he had any idea of regeneration and sanctification by the Spirit, distinct from baptism. But he knew too little of the subject even to understand us!—In regard to the nature of Christ, the bishop expressed his full belief that he is perfect God and perfect man, and added, too, (in agreement with Nestorius, but contrary to the doctrine usually ascribed to him,) that his two natures are united in *one person*, using for person the word *knooma*. The Spirit, he thought, proceeded from the Father only.

At last, the bishop came upon that *Shibboleth* of party in the oriental churches, the sign of the cross, and asked us to show how we make it. We replied that we do not make it at all. Not that we have any law against it, but if a man is at heart a Christian, we do not consider such a sign necessary, especially as it is not ordered in the New Testament. 'But,' said he, 'are we not ordered to take up our cross and follow Christ?' 'Yes,' we replied, 'but if this sign be the cross of which our Savior spoke, we ought to make it on the back, instead of the breast!' Another thought that our neglect of this ceremony showed an unwillingness to make an open profession of Christianity, and quoted the words, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." We declared that our ideas most fully accord with this important passage, and that in no case should the

fear of man lead us to deny our religion. We must profess it in the face of danger and of death. In fact this would be what our Savior means by taking up our cross. It is to imitate him in enduring contumely and suffering for his sake. 'But,' said the bishop, 'without the sign of the cross, how can you show that you are Christians?' 'By obeying him,' we replied, 'and manifesting in all our conduct, that we love him.' Still it appeared to him very strange, that we should call ourselves Christians, and not make the cross.—The Nestorians perform this ceremony in the same manner as the Greeks.

The Chaldean priest at Khósrova, in agreement with Asseman, whom he seemed to have diligently studied, assured us that the ancient books of the Nestorians treat of *seven sacraments*, and those the same that are acknowledged by the papal church. He declared, that now, however, they have really none at all. For, in the celebration of mass the words of consecration are wanting. Baptism is performed very negligently, and in no uniform manner. They pretend to have marriage, but if the wife be guilty of adultery, the husband is allowed to take another. Ordination too is made to consist with permission for the clergy to marry, as often as they become widowers, to the number of seven and a half wives, a widow being considered the half wife. Confession has long since been abolished. And of confirmation and extreme unction, he said, they have at present no knowledge.—We inquired of the bishop at Jamálava, the number of the Nestorian sacraments, on the first evening of our visit. He immediately replied *seven*; and when requested to enumerate them, repeated *baptism, the eucharist, ordination, and marriage*, without hesitation. Then he stopped to think and inquire, and finally added, *burial, the sacred leaven, and confession*. Upon being interrogated, however, he most fully denied the existence of *auricular confession*, and affirmed that they

confess their sins only to God, and demand absolution from him alone. The practice of anointing the sick as a preparation for death, too, or *extreme unction*, he confessed had no existence among them, and pretended that the burial service alone is a sacrament. *Confirmation* he never alluded to, except to imply that it does not exist, as will be soon mentioned.—After our afternoon's visit to the bishop mentioned above, he followed us to our room, and, with many of his flock, spent the evening in conversation. We now solicited from him a written list of their sacraments, and obtained the following: viz. *baptism* (maamoodeeta); *the eucharist* (korbána); *ordination* (siám eedat káhna [kahenoota]); *consecration of churches* (siam eedat oomara); *marriage* (boorákha); *the consecrated leaven* (kodáshat khmeera [khmeera kodeesha]); and *consecrated oil* (kodáshat korna [korna or mashha kodeesha]).

Baptism, he said, is performed only in churches, and the whole body of the child is plunged three times in the water, because John plunged our Savior three times in Jordan. When we mentioned, however, that we had heard that they only plunge the body up to the chin, and then pour water three times upon the head, his father confessed that they do so, though they plunge the whole, also, when there is water enough! When asked the effect of baptism, both replied that it is the regeneration spoken of by our Savior, when he said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." We suggested that he explained himself, by saying in a subsequent verse, "Except a man be born of water and of the *Spirit*." 'Yes,' they replied, 'as the Spirit descended upon Christ at Jordan, so he now, in every instance, descends upon all persons at their baptism.' The bishop would not allow that the souls of infants that die before baptism are doomed to hell, nor did he admit that they are received to heaven, but said that a place is prepared specially for them.—To as-

certain if the ceremony of *confirmation* is not, as among the Armenians, added to that of baptism, we asked if they have not the *meirón*. He confessed that a single drop of oil is put upon the forehead of the child, but contended that it is only consecrated by the officiating priest for the occasion, and not by the patriarch, and that it is not a distinct sacrament, but an integral part of baptism. He seemed amused at our question, whether circumcision is practised by them, as if the union of a moslem (as he called it) to a Christian rite, was not only unheard of, but implied an absurdity. We informed him that the Abyssinians both circumcise and baptize. He expressed a fear that it would be with them, as with a man near Mosul, who, to obtain a certain woman, turned moslem. On the night of their marriage he died; and his wife sat to bewailing him, and said, 'Alas man! you have rejected the Messiah, and Mohammed has not received you; where can your soul go!'

The sacrament of the *sacred leaven* he thus explained. At the institution of the eucharist, our Savior gave two pieces of the bread to John, the beloved disciple. He saved one, and dipped it in the blood and water that flowed from his Lord's side, when pierced with the spear upon the cross. This was the original leaven. It is now renewed once a year, on Holy Thursday. Flour, wine, and oil are mixed and consecrated; and then always kept in a vessel in the church, to be mixed, like leaven, with the bread of the sacrament of the supper.

The bread of the *eucharist*, he said, is made in the form of small, round, thick cakes, with a cross, and nothing else, stamped upon them. It is kneaded and baked in the church at the time of the celebration of the sacrament, a small oven being provided for the purpose; and he seemed somewhat stumbled at our taking common baker's bread for so holy a purpose. In fact, it was evident from his whole account, that uncommon sacredness is ascribed to

this ordinance. Although in the usual services of the church the priests make no change in their ordinary dress, he said that on this occasion, they are clothed in a white robe with a red fillet around the neck. That we could consecrate the elements with our shoes on, quite astonished him. They, not only remove their shoes, but no one that has not some grade in the church, can enter the part of the church called the sanctuary, at all; nor can even those that have, do it without previously fasting. The consecrated elements are never carried from the church as a viaticum, but persons nigh unto death, if the priest deems them pure and worthy, are sometimes brought to receive them there. We did not learn whether this is always done, or is deemed essential. He was amazed that we, on similar occasions, sometimes celebrate the ordinance by the bedside of the sick; and exclaimed, 'How is it possible that the body of our Lord should be consecrated in an unconsecrated place!' In short, he declared most positively, that the elements after consecration are no longer bread and wine, but truly the body and blood of the Lord, and affirmed that they worship them very much.

The communicants partake first of the bread, and then of the wine; and this, we were surprised and gratified to find, is done by all, every time the ordinance is celebrated. 'We do not,' said the bishop, 'like the other sects, consecrate the elements, and give them to none, or to only two or three, but to all who are pure and worthy to receive them; to those who are not pure, and to children who have not yet learned their prayers, only bread is given.' This seemed at once to show that the Nestorians have not the abominable *mass* of the Latin and other old churches, and that their eucharist is only the celebration of the supper for purposes of communion; and we asked, with eagerness, how often it occurs,—to know if even in frequency of repetition it has any resemblance to the pretended daily sacrifice

of the mass. He said they attend to it only on the more important days, and are not very regular; on another occasion he numbered twelve days, when it was most necessary; and finally stated, that some years it might be celebrated no more than three or four times, and others as many as thirty. Another declaration of the bishop revealed a second equally important peculiarity of the Nestorian church. 'We admit,' said he, 'all the *twelve* Christian sects to our communion, if they will come, but none of them admit us to theirs.' In answer to an inquiry from us, he affirmed that the Nestorians, in return, have full liberty to go to the communion of any other denomination. We explained that we also hold to similar principles of open communion. But, seeming to have an idea that the twelve apostles divided the earth between them, and established twelve orthodox sects, with different usages and rites, all of which differ from his own in this respect; he was perplexed to know where to class us, and asked who was our apostle. We replied, that as America was not known to exist till three or four hundred years ago, none of them could have gone thither. Their own apostles, he said, were St. Thomas from among the twelve, and St. Addai (Thaddeus) and St. Mari from the seventy-two. To test the truth of our professions, he asked if we would administer the communion to him, were he to visit America. Our reply that we admit all good men, was unsatisfactory; and he said, 'Whether I am good or not, if I come in an unknown stranger, would you give me the communion?' We answered in the negative; and asked their own practice in this respect. He declared that the priest explains to the people what character will render them worthy communicants, and that if they have committed such and such sins they are unworthy. Those who have the character described, he invites to draw nigh; those who are guilty of the sins, he forbids, saying it is a fire that will consume them. But if a wicked man,

not knowing his guilt, or from presumption, should present himself, the elements would not be denied him. Should an apostate to Mohammedanism wish to return, however, he confessed that he would not be admitted to the communion, till he had fasted fifty days; repented and bewailed his sin from the heart; and had prayers read over his head by the priest in the church.—He assured us that they do not imitate the washing of the disciples feet on Holy Thursday.

Marriage is celebrated, he informed us, sometimes in the church, and sometimes in private houses. In the latter case, the communion is not connected with it, but only unconsecrated bread and wine are given to the married couple. Respecting divorce, his assertions were contradictory. He first affirmed that none is acknowledged which allows the separated parties to marry again. But a few questions drew from him the admission, that in case of adultery, if the fault be the woman's, the man may take another wife, and if it be the man's, the woman may take another husband.

The *consecrated oil* is used, he said, but for two purposes; the ordination of patriarchs, and the coronation of kings, as Samuel anointed Saul and David. It is consecrated for the occasion, by the bishops who ordain the patriarch.—*Churches are consecrated* when a new one is built, or an old one has been desecrated by a moslem's entering the sanctuary. It is done by a bishop. He uses oil, which is consecrated by him for the occasion.

March 13. We spent the Sabbath at Jamálava. It was the beginning of the Nestorian lent. The Armenians, however, were not to begin theirs until to-morrow, and observed to-day as carnival. Fifteen or twenty families of that nation reside here, and have one church; their only clergyman is a deacon, and they are obliged to bring a priest from Ada to say mass. In the afternoon, a crowd of them assembled in the yard of one of their houses, for

amusement. The younger and more playful danced to the sound of music, and the older and more respectably dressed sat upon the ground in a corner, quaffing large draughts of wine; all seemed to have equally forgotten the sacredness of the day. A curious ornament, but one as ancient as the days of Rebecca,* was observed upon the younger females. It was a large ring inserted in the cartilage of the nose. We had already noticed a girl thus decked at Khósrova; and here was another, among the dancers, with the nose-ring connected to that of the ear by a heavy chain of ornaments. It reminded me of a similar appendage to the nose, used by some of the women of Cairo in Egypt.— We met no other Armenians in the province of Oormiah. There are others, but they are so few, in consequence of the large emigration to the Russian territories, that we deemed it unimportant to search for them.

* See Gen. 24: 47.

LETTER XXI.

OORMIAH.

Plain of Oormiah—Reception at Ada—Mar Yoosuf—Nestorian fasts—Evening prayers—Number of the Nestorian sacraments—Baptism—Forgiveness of sins—Eucharist—Nestorian clergy—Education—Regard for papacy—Education of the clergy—Political discontent—Town of Oormiah—Disregard to truth—Reception at Ardishai—Dress of the Nestorian clergy—Mar Gabriel and his diocese—Evening prayers—Eucharist—Baptism—The bishop's house and family—Fasting—Argument with a Chaldean—Reasons for not proceeding farther—Koosy—Evening prayers—Nestorian manuscripts—Interview with Mar Oorahám—The Takhsa—The Sünbedüs—Celebration of the eucharist—Suggestions respecting a mission in Persia.

DEAR SIR,

OUR delay of two days at Jamálava more than realized the pleasure we had anticipated from visiting the Nestorians. The friendliness, simplicity, and unreserved frankness of the bishop and his flock, and the amount of information he patiently allowed us to draw from him by an almost uninterrupted series of questions, gave a deep interest to our intercourse. We bade them farewell at an early hour on the 14th of March, to visit another Nestorian bishop at Ada, about five fúrsakhs distant. After leaving the few villages in the vicinity of Jamálava, the narrow plain between the mountains and the lake ceased to be cultivated. At the distance of four or five miles, the plain of Oormiah opened, projecting for some distance into the lake on the left, and extending up between the mountains on the right. It seemed of great extent, and almost perfectly level. A road led directly to the town of

Oormiah, on its southwest side near the foot of the mountains, at a distance of at least ten miles from the lake. We turned to the left, and were soon surrounded by marks of a dense population and of extreme fertility. Villages were separated but a little from each other, and the fruit trees and poplars around them resembled a continuous forest. Almost every spot was cultivated with grain or cotton, and the canals which irrigated them, (some of them so large as to be used for mill-streams,) were so frequent and full as seriously to impede our progress. Nothing could exceed the apparent fertility of the dark loam which formed the soil. In a word, the native province of Zoroaster, (for tradition pretends that Zoroaster was born in Oormiah,) seemed altogether the finest, the most densely populated and highly cultivated tract we had seen in Asia.—As we passed along, an old Kürdish shepherd by the side of the path cried out, ‘Aha! you are just the men I have been wanting to see for a long time. Our governor here oppresses, beats and kills us. This is Kürdistán; the Kürds are many, and the *Kuzul-báshes* (Persians) are few. When are you coming to take the country and allow us a chance to beat and kill them?’ He supposed we were Russians; and the inhabitants of a Kürdish village nor far beyond, seemed equally glad to see us, and asked when we came from Eriván.

At Ada, we announced ourselves as clergymen, and inquired for the bishop. He was an elderly man, by the name of Yoosuf. We were received cordially, and provided with comfortable accommodations. Hardly had we dismounted, before nearly the whole village crowded around us. They followed us to our room, and filled it almost to suffocation. Pleased as we were to see such an interest excited by our arrival, we feared it would seem to their rulers like a tumultuous rising, and would gladly have persuaded many of them to retire. But our remonstrances

were in vain, and the bishop, when urged to exert his authority, assured us that the whole was but the overflowing of pure love to us, and we must bear with them. They listened to our conversation until late at night, and were finally persuaded to retire, only by our declaring that we were going to bed.

As we took our seat with the bishop, a pipe was offered him, but he declined it, saying that it being lent he fasted all day, without eating, drinking, or smoking, until after evening prayers. He confessed, however, that in this he followed merely his own choice, or at the most a rule binding upon bishops alone, as the common people fast thus only until after the prayers at midday. Respecting the prohibition of every animal production during their fasts, and their commencement and termination at sunset instead of midnight, he confirmed what had been said at Jamálava. Our own disregard of all fasting rules excited his surprise, as it did that of all the Nestorians whom we met. We plainly declared, that we acknowledge no distinction between different kinds of food, but hold fasting to be important because the Scriptures approve of it: still, as they have fixed no particular days, we leave individual Christians to their own choice. The explanation seemed not sufficiently satisfactory to remove the impression, that we wantonly trample upon a most sacred custom. His reason for the church's fasting fifty instead of forty days was curious. He allowed that our Savior first fasted forty days in the wilderness, and that the apostles in imitation of him observed the same length of time: but said they fasted all the time, without eating night or day; this we are unable to do, and they have consequently granted us liberty in the Apostolical Canons to eat at night, but in consideration of the indulgence have increased the number of days to fifty.

We attended evening prayers with the bishop. No other ceremonies were observed than at Jamálava, except that

the deacon, when reading the Psalter, wore, in addition to his ordinary clothes, a white sash around his loins, and a similar band passing over his left shoulder and tucked under the sash before and behind. Burning incense too was carried around to each individual of the congregation, for him to hold his hands and face in its smoke. The poverty of the church was similar, and the apparent want of devotion even greater. There were no pictures nor images, and the bishop testified that they are not allowed. But he confessed that relics of saints are highly venerated by his countrymen, and in fact, that they can build no church without putting a relic under the altar.

Mar Yoosuf of Ada was as ready as Mar Yohanna of Jamálava to declare the number of the Nestorian sacraments to be seven. He enumerated baptism, the eucharist, ordination, marriage, confession, consecration of churches, and burial. But when interrogated, he explained that auricular confession is found only in their ancient books, and is now never practised. By the sacrament of burial, too, he intended merely the services connected with putting the body in the ground. And he admitted that the sacred leaven, and the consecrated oil, are likewise sacraments; remarking, as we reminded him of them, that we must have read their books.

Baptism, he said, cannot be administered by a deacon, nor indeed by a priest without a deacon, as both have a part to perform. When asked the effect of baptism, he replied, in connection with a priest, who seemed a clever man and sat by his side to help him in his answers, ‘Christ said to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus, being advanced in years, asked, “How can a man be born when he is old?” Our Savior explained by saying, “except a man be born of *water*,” &c. It was baptism of which he spoke.’ ‘But was that all?’ said we; ‘he added something more.’

‘True,’ rejoined the bishop, ‘as the Spirit descended upon Christ at his baptism, so he now descends upon all who are baptized.’ He seemed, in this and in some other of his explanations, to quote from a book, and the similarity of his remarks to those of the bishop at Jamálava, made us suspect that some book is in common use among them, which explains their dogmas. When questioned farther, he declared that baptism takes away original sin; and we then asked him, how we are to obtain the pardon of actual sin. He at first said that we must go and confess our sins to the priest, and then fast and weep; but immediately admitted that no such confession is now practised. Still he contended that when a person, who has apostatized to Mohammedanism, or committed any other great crime, wishes to return, he first goes and tells the priest, then fasts a certain number of days in the church, (the apostate forty days,) praying and weeping, making a certain number of genuflections every day, and putting ashes under him and on his head; and at the end, the priest, on the morning of the communion, reads over him at the altar an absolution, the tenor of which is, that if he has sincerely repented he is forgiven in heaven as well as on earth, but if he has not repented he is forgiven neither in heaven nor on earth. He is then admitted to the communion. If he fall away into the same crime again, however, a second absolution is never given, nor is he ever after allowed to partake of the eucharist.

He represented that the eucharist is celebrated oftener than Mar Yohanna had given us to understand; and even said it ought to be done every day. In practice, however, it occurs, he allowed, only on Sundays, the festivals, and frequently in lent; perhaps from fifty to a hundred times a year. He added his testimony, that on every occasion all who are pure and worthy are accustomed to commune. The priest reads to the audience assembled a warning

against certain sins, they say, 'we repent,' and he then administers to them the elements. Should a person present himself, who is known not to be prepared, one for instance who has quarrelled with his neighbor and not become reconciled, he is refused. When asked if members of other denominations are allowed to come to their communion, he replied, 'most certainly, all the twelve Christian sects are our brethren, why should they not come?' And he allowed, that though he should object to a Nestorian's going to another sect when there was a church of his own open in the same place, he should be perfectly willing when there was none, that he should commune with the English, the Armenians, or any other of the twelve. We asked, if the Nestorians believe that the bread and wine of the sacrament become the real body and blood of Christ. 'Most certainly,' he replied, 'that is our hope; by what else do we expect to be saved from our sins?' And we understood him to acknowledge it to be a propitiatory sacrifice. He also said they worship it; but the words he used might mean no more than reverence.

His account of the income of the clergy agreed nearly with that of Mar Yohanna. The bishop receives from every individual in his diocese a tax of two sháhies (about 3 cts.) per annum; a fee of one réal (about 35 cts.) for every marriage; and for ordination, from five to twenty réals, according to the circumstances of the candidate. A priest receives four batmáns (about 40 lbs.) annually from every granary; for marriages a fee of one réal; and four sháhies for baptisms; with sometimes a few voluntary contributions for other ceremonies. But this income is not sufficient to support the priests, and they are obliged to labor like other men.—The two bishops agreed, also, in the number and names of the ecclesiastical orders; except that Mar Yoosuf allowed that the two grades of katoleeka and patriárka are united in the person of Mar Shimón. He added that none

below the bishop can perform ordination, and that bishops themselves can be ordained only by the patriarch. The patriarch is ordained by two matrâns. With the exception of the patriarch, at whose consecration alone oil is used, the ordination ceremony of the other grades consists merely in prayers said over the candidate, the imposition of hands, and cutting so much of the hair on the crown as when grasped in the hand rises above it. The last particular contradicted what had been told us by the Chaldean deacon at Jamálava, that the Nestorians make the tonsure in the form of a cross. The bishop wished to know how our own clergy are ordained, and seemed satisfied with our statement, that the ceremony consists merely in the imposition of hands and prayer, without oil or the tonsure. But on learning that we have no higher order than priests, he wondered how they could get ordination. 'As in your own church,' said we, 'two matrâns ordain a patriarch who is greater than they, so in ours, two or more priests ordain a priest, their equal.' 'It is right,' he replied, 'but who preached the gospel to you?' He went on to say, that our Savior sent his *twelve* apostles into different parts of the earth, and from them sprang *twelve sects*. He could not enumerate them, but declared that their names are found in the Nestorian books. His idea was, that although the gospel is one, each apostle gave to his own sect particular institutions, which are binding upon it, and not upon the others. Upon no other sect, he thought, had so onerous rites been imposed, as upon the Nestorians. All the twelve are orthodox; but any new thirteenth or fourteenth sect he would immediately pronounce to be heretical.

The bishop informed us, that there are only 30 houses of Nestorians in Ada, but I am inclined to prefer Mar Yohana's statement, that there are 80, especially as it is in his diocese. They have two churches, with a priest and one or two deacons. Its Armenian inhabitants were formerly

numerous, but nearly all have gone to the Russian provinces. It has no school. A year or two ago, the bishop said, he procured an instructor who taught three or four, and they are the only readers in the village. He declared that the Nestorians are extremely fond of learning, but moslem oppression allows them no time for it, and puts it out of the power of parents to educate their children. The priest had a son, and he had a nephew, he said, whom they wished much to educate, but it was impossible. We inquired for schools in his diocese, but he declared that he had no diocese, not even this village belonged to him. Two or three others, he said, were claiming all they could; he thought such a course unchristian, and claimed nothing.

The subject of education led him to remark, that bishop Shevris spent much for the instruction of the Nestorians, and that of the few who have any knowledge of letters, a large portion are indebted to him for it. We inquired whether such efforts were acceptable to them. 'Yes,' said he, 'but he told us to turn to the church of Rome, and we would not turn. I was at Kochannes once, when he offered Mar Shimón four thousand tománs, if he would become a papist!'—We had already inquired of Mar Yohanna at Jamálava, in what estimation the pope is held by the Nestorians, and received for answer, that they reverence the see of Rome, but do not acknowledge him who occupies it. He distinctly declared, too, that Peter not merely stood at the head of the apostles in wisdom and energy, but was clothed with authority over all the rest, by the declaration of our Savior to him—"Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," &c. We reminded him that this is said likewise expressly to all the apostles; but he replied, that to Peter alone was it said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church." The argument was closed by our declaring, that this does not at all imply that the church is not equally built upon the other apostles; in

Rev. 21: 14, the New Jerusalem is said to have *twelve* foundations, and in them the names of the *twelve apostles* of the Lamb; and in Eph. 2: 20, believers are said to be built upon the foundation of the *apostles and prophets*, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.—We now expressed our hope to Mar Yoosuf, that his nation will never yield to propositions like those of bishop Shevris, and inquired what they thought of the pope. ‘We receive him,’ was the reply. ‘What,’ said we, ‘are you a *katoleek*?’ (the name by which the members of the papal church are generally known among them.) ‘Is the pope a *katoleek*?’ he asked. We assured him that he is more of a *katoleek* than any person he ever saw. ‘Then,’ said he, with deep feeling, ‘I dont receive him, for he has departed from the gospel path, has he not?’ He still declared that he considered Peter the head of the apostles, and contended with some warmth, that Christ ordered them all to obey him.—These remarks of the bishop singularly confirmed what the Chaldean priest had told us at Khósrova, that while the Nestorians are strongly prejudiced against the Roman Catholics, they have great reverence for the pope, and believe that his religion is like theirs, supposing his tenets to have been misrepresented to them by his professed followers.

The bishop’s quotations from Scripture, especially in proof of his last position, were very incorrect, and betrayed but a slight knowledge of the word of God. With the modern Syriac alphabet, he seemed to be not at all acquainted; but he could still read our copy of the Syriac New Testament, with a little difficulty in regard to now and then a word. The language of their church books, he declared, is not understood by the common people; but the priests are accustomed to explain particular parts of the services, especially the lessons from the Gospel. This he called preaching. He affirmed that in the mountains, there are some schools designed specially for the education of the

clergy; but we obtained from him no information respecting them. He confirmed the statement already given, that this province formerly acknowledged the supremacy of Mar Elias of El Koosh, but left him when he became a papist, (as he now is,) and submitted to Mar Shimón. The confession of Mar Yohanna, that Christ is perfect God and perfect man existing in one person, was also acceded to by him; with the additional explanation, that the two persons, human and divine, are so united as to have become one. He declared too, with that bishop, that his nation derive their name *Nusrány*, from Nazareth, where Christ was brought up; but added the singular assertion, *that they are descended from the ten tribes of Israel.*

Before leaving Jamálava, we had been asked by Mar Yohanna, when we thought the authority would pass from the hands of moslem into those of Christian kings. Understanding him to refer to the millenium, we told him that God has indeed promised a time when all men shall not only be under Christian governments, but shall themselves be Christians, and we hoped it would not be long delayed, but how long, we felt unable to determine from the word of God. We ascertained from him, that he had no expectation of Christ's appearing on earth again till he comes to judge the world, and in fact had no distinct ideas of the millenium at all. But he said he was not speaking of the latter days, when Elias would come, and the gospel be preached to all people, but to a time not far distant, when the government of the nations would pass into the hands of Christian kings. His meaning was not fully understood till we reached Ada. The salutation of the old Kürd, on the road, was an indication of political discontent. On our arrival here, the first Nestorian who entered our room, said distinctly that he wished to go to Tiflis with us. After the company had dispersed at night, another stopped to say, that all the young men in the place had taken an oath in

the church, and subscribed their names to a promise, that they would leave for Georgia within three days. They could bear their oppressions no longer. Our situation, in this high excitement, you can readily conceive was delicate. The crowd that collected around us, might be taken by the rulers for a rising of the people *en masse* to receive us as their deliverers. Two moslem servants of the khan who owns the village, actually came to inquire who we were, but were satisfied by a sight of our rákams. The Nestorians we took every means to make understand our real character, that no false hopes might be raised. And in order not to implicate ourselves, not only were all questions that could possibly have a political bearing carefully avoided by us, but Antonio was charged to be equally cautious. To harden our hearts thus, however, was difficult in the extreme, and 'while we held our peace our sorrow was stirred.' For a poor man was drawn up and bastinadoed near our door just after we arrived. The only occasion of his punishment was, if we may believe his townsmen, that the khan who owns the village, had demanded of him ten tománs or his daughter. The poor man had but two goats in the world, and could not give the money. He loved his daughter, and would not give her. But they expected the cruelty would be repeated, until his resolution to withhold her would be overcome.

March 15. Ada is two and a half or three fúrsakhs nearly eastward from the town of Oormiah, (often pronounced Oroomiah.) Our intention to visit that place was frustrated by the existence of the plague. It was indeed in many of the villages, also, and one very near Ada was infected. But the danger from travelling among them was small, as we were able, by careful inquiry, to shun all that had the disease. In the town, according to some accounts, it was just at that time attended with much mortality; and to mingle with a dense city population under such

circumstances, would have been attended with great exposure. We determined therefore to avoid it, especially as there was very little inducement to draw us thither. Its Nestorian inhabitants, we were informed at our next station, hardly amount to more than a hundred houses. Of papists, of any kind, there are none.

Having learned that another Nestorian bishop resides at Ardishai, five fûrsakhs from Ada and two fûrsakhs below Oormiah on the road to the southern end of the lake, we started for that place at an early hour this morning. The country was fertile, and villages were almost as frequent as yesterday. Our guide from Ada afforded an instance of the little confidence that can be reposed in statistical information obtained from this people; and reminds me to say, that the statements of that kind, which the Nestorians gave us, were so very uncertain and contradictory, that we despaired of making any approximation to the truth. He declared, that besides 50 Nestorian families in Ada, there were 70 of papists, and that he was himself one of the latter. But Nestorians and Chaldeans afterward assured us, that he was not a papist himself, and that there were none at Ada; but that he had probably told us the story, under the impression that we were of that sect, and should be gratified by it. We imagined that some of the statements of the bishops, and indeed many of those of Mar Yoosuf, were similarly colored for the same reason. We took pains to proclaim that we had no connection with the pope: still, they could not be persuaded at once that our doctrines were not like those of the papists, and that our esteem for them would not be increased in proportion as we found theirs of a similar character.

We were hardly in sight of Ardishai, before the people were seen upon their terraces, and running from all directions to meet us; and by the time we reached the bishop's door, a crowd of hundreds of men, women and children

beset us, all apparently overjoyed at our arrival. We were actually alarmed for the consequences of such excitement, and begged the bishop to give us a room immediately that we might escape the multitude. He invited us into his own house. But they crowded upon us there, and though often dispersed by his command, given at our request, they as often returned, until we finally stationed a servant at the door to prevent more than a small number from entering. No other reason was assigned for their assembling, than affection for us, and a wish to see us. Curiosity to see Europeans, of whom few had ever been among them, was probably one cause of the excitement; nor do I doubt that real friendliness of heart had some influence; but a hope that we would free them from their oppressions was uppermost in their minds. We took such a course at Ardishai, as to hear few of their complaints.

None of the Nestorian clergy were distinguished from the laity by their dress, except the bishops. They wore a Kürdish costume, which consisted of a large red cap, hanging down behind and wound around with a turban, instead of the conical sheepskin cap of the Persians, and of flowing robes somewhat in the Osmanly fashion. The dress of the bishop of Ardishai, however, was distinguished in nothing from the Persian mode, except that upon his head he had only a tight red skull-cap. His name was Gabriel. He was a beardless youth, aged, according to his own and his mother's declaration, only twenty; and yet he had been ordained to the episcopate seven years! Though young, his manner was sober enough, perhaps, but he seemed extremely heedless. An oath frequently slipped from his mouth in conversation. So difficult did we find it to draw his attention more than a minute to any topics we brought forward, and his answers were given with so little thought, and in some cases with so little regard to truth, that we despaired, at first, of obtaining from him any accurate

information. He is the seventh of his family, who have occupied this see in succession.—The village of Ardishai, he said, consists of 100 families of Nestorians, who have four or five churches, and as many deacons, but no priests, all of them having died of the epidemic the last year. He affirmed positively that it contains no papists; but when a Chaldean priest afterward came in, he confessed that there are two priests and four or five families of that sect. The village of Barbary, their principal residence, and where they have another priest, is not far to the south; and a few live also in another village in the province. The bishop's diocese, if we may believe his own statements, embraces 20 or 30 villages. Ten schools are taught in them by priests, each of which has from five to ten boys, and one as many as twenty. He alluded to the existence of schools in the mountains for the education of the clergy, but added no information respecting them. Convents, he assured us, exist in those parts for females as well as males; and both monks and nuns have completely retired from the world, are under a vow of celibacy, and can never marry. He estimated the Nestorians of the province of Oormiah at four or five thousand families.

We attended evening prayers with the bishop, but observed little to add to what I have already said of their forms of worship. Each one on entering, not only went to kiss the hand of the bishop, as in the other places, but came to us also, and passed around the congregation, for the same purpose, seeming to intend it for a mere fraternal salutation. The church being sufficiently lighted by the sun, the use of candles, which was observed in all the other churches we visited, was dispensed with. Nor was any incense used; but the reason assigned for neglecting it, was that it had been stolen from the church the night before. The deacon merely loosened the end of his sash and passed it over his left shoulder to read the Psalter.

Of devotion there was no appearance. The bishop and deacons talked to each other and to the members of the congregation in the midst of their prayers, and seemed to attach no meaning at all to the words they read. The church differed from those at Jamálava and Ada, only in being a little larger; and like all we saw, the altar was in the eastern extremity. Such a position of the altar, the bishop informed us, is always observed by the Nestorians; and they never pray without turning the face to the east.

He confirmed what Mar Yohanna had said respecting the bread of the eucharist, and the cross stamped upon it; but added, that several loaves are often consecrated at the same time to be given to the people, and that two are always reserved for the priest and deacon. Our consecrating the elements in unconsecrated places seemed also to stumble him. He denied that they practise infant communion; but could mention no particular age when children are first admitted to the ordinance. They are sometimes allowed to come at five, but never at three years of age. We inquired what preparation is deemed necessary before partaking of the communion. He replied, that they fast from the evening before until its celebration, whether it be at morning or at midday prayers; and that they settle their quarrels so as to be at peace with each other. Auricular confession they never practise, but the priests read to the assembled congregation a general confession embracing five sins. The elements are received by the people, standing before the door of the sanctuary. Each one, he said, stoops forward a little with his hand open under his chin, while the priest breaks off a bit of the bread and puts it in his mouth. He then goes in the same posture to the deacon, and drinks the wine from a bowl in his hand. The bishop was careful to say, as if it was a point of some importance, and inquiring at the same time our own practice, that the people are all served first, then the priest partakes, and last of all the deacon.

We could not learn from him that the canons of the Nestorian church designate any particular age for the baptism of infants. It can be performed, he said, only on the days when the eucharist is celebrated, and is generally attended to on some festival. The body of the child is immersed in water up to the breast or chin, and the priest, taking up water in his hand three times, pours it upon his head, first in the name of the Father, then in the name of the Son, and last in the name of the Holy Ghost, making each time the sign of the cross upon the top of the head. When infants die before baptism, he thought like Mar Yohanna, that their souls go neither to heaven nor to hell, but to a place prepared specially for them.

March 16. A continued fall of rain detained us the whole day at Ardishai, and confined us to the bishop's house. It consisted of one very large room, twenty or thirty feet high, lighted by only small holes in the terrace, and warmed by only a tannoor which was used for all the purposes of cooking. Besides carpets, felts, mats, mattresses, coverlets, and cushions, (the usual furniture of a Persian peasant's house,) we noticed an additional article which deserves a description. It was an instrument commonly used here for cleaning cotton; and consisted merely of two plain cylinders about eighteen inches long, one of wood four or five inches in diameter, and the other of iron less than an inch in diameter. The larger was turned by a crank, and being in contact with the smaller turned that also. The fibres of the cotton are drawn between them by the motion, and thus stripped from the seeds, which, being too large to pass through, roll down quite naked. The process is slow, owing to the smallness of the machine, but the work is well done. We slept at night upon the carpets where we had sat during the evening, and the family of the bishop's mother, males and females, scattered themselves promiscuously on the ground, each under his coverlet. They were called

to prayers in the church at daybreak, but we observed no devotions in the family while we remained in it, except that one man on rising went through a series of prostrations and kneelings, which might, but for the frequent signs of the cross that accompanied them, have been mistaken for a part of a Mohammedan's prayers. The bishop informed us that the Nestorians have forms of private prayer, which are observed by some, but neglected at the option of every individual.

The rule of fasting which Mar Yoosuf had prescribed to himself, was not observed by Mar Gabriel. He hesitated not to smoke before evening prayers yesterday; and he ate to day with the family after midday prayers; but until that hour, all strictly fasted. The bishop at Ada had gratified us by declining to drink wine; on the ground that it is not allowed during lent. But his brother of Ardishai urged us to join him in a glass of brandy. We proposed to substitute wine as a more innocent beverage, but he likewise would not touch it. It could of course be no rule of temperance that proscribed its use, as we had at first hoped: and we found on inquiry, that only a little fat, usually put in the jars to preserve it, makes it a forbidden drink; while brandy not being thus contaminated, may be drunk with impunity. Surely this is straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel!

All the inhabitants of the village observed the day as a holiday, abstaining entirely from labor; but not one could tell us why, nor whether it is dedicated to any saint or not. The bishop said, that the time of many of their festivals, and especially of Easter, corresponds with the Armenian calendar, but others fall on different days. Christmas is observed on the 25th of December. He admitted that they worship the saints, and that prayers to them are scattered through many of their church books. We inquired if the body of the virgin was taken up to heaven; and were at first

answered without hesitation that it is still in the grave ; on recollecting, however, that his church observes the festival of the Assumption, he hesitated, and said he must look in his books.—Observing him and a deacon leaving the house, in the course of the morning, with a prayer-book and censer, we inquired their object. They were going, he replied, to say prayers over the grave of a person lately dead ; a ceremony that is performed on the day of the burial, and on the third, seventh, and fortieth days afterward. Masses for the dead ought also to be celebrated on the same days, but none had been said this morning, as their church was a little out of order.

While we were occupied most of the day in writing, the bishop spent much of it in reading and chanting from our Syriac Testament, and seemed so much pleased with it, that we finally gave him a copy. He declared that he had never before seen the character in which it was printed, and still he read it with perfect ease. It was his opinion, however, that it could not be read by his clergy generally. Its language he pronounced to be the same with that of their church books, and not intelligible to the people. But he showed us a beautiful copy of the Pentateuch, accompanied by an explanation which he said the common people can understand. Among his books, was one with now and then an Arabic sentence interspersed, which seemed to indicate that it was a Syriac grammar upon the Arabic system, but the bishop could not tell us what it was.

In the evening a Chaldean joined the family circle of the bishop, and an animated argument upon several of the doctrines of the papal church was introduced, by our alluding to the history of the defection of England from the faith and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the pope. I can only touch very briefly upon the different topics discussed.—The bishop inquired if we confess to our priests, and expressed his satisfaction at finding that we agree with his

own church in confessing to God only. The Chaldean said, 'Is it not written, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven?"' His argument was answered, by our reminding him that this assurance was given to the apostles who were inspired, and not to their successors. He soon found another, by asking if the rite of absolution was not enjoined in the command of our Savior to Peter, to forgive an offending brother not "until seven times, but until seventy times seven?" He was made to see, that what Peter was ordered to forgive, was merely a sin against himself, and not sins in general. Christ's direction to the leper to show himself to the priest, was then pleaded as a precedent in favor of auricular confession to the priesthood. But the topic was concluded by our showing, that the custom alluded to was merely a sanitary regulation of the Mosaic law.—We asked the Chaldean if the priests of his church administer the cup to the laity at communion. 'They do,' said he, 'as Christ directed. They break the consecrated wafer in two parts, and dipping one in the wine, make the sign of the cross with it over the other, and then give it to the people.' 'Which?' we asked; 'the one dipped in the wine?' He confessed, with apparent reluctance, that it was the other. We then requested the bishop to read Math. 26: 26—28, that we might see how Christ directed the ordinance to be administered. He did so from our Syriac Testament, laying a significant emphasis upon the command—"Drink ye *all* of it;" and the Chaldean was silenced.

We mentioned, as another difference between us and the papists, that we admit to our communion members of other denominations. 'Why, so do we,' said the bishop, 'we consider all Christians as brethren; but these papists admit none but papists to their communion.' We assured him, that their church goes still farther, and teaches that

none but papists can be saved. The Chaldean would have explained the doctrine into a general declaration, that none can be saved who depart from the fundamental principles of the gospel. But Antonio silenced him by opportunely declaring that the papists once converted him, and one of the dogmas he learned from them was, that out of the Apostolical Roman Catholic Church there is no salvation.—The principle of the papal church, was next mentioned by us, which forbids the people to have the Scriptures in a language they can understand. It was new to the bishop, and he asked, with great astonishment, the reason of it. We replied that the papists can best tell; but assured him that it is so strictly enforced, that not only are people who happen to come in possession of them often obliged to give them up, but we have actually known them to be burned.—The subject of images, too, was brought forward in an inquiry by the bishop, if we use them in any of our religious ceremonies. We assured him that we regard them as utterly prohibited by God, and referred him to Ex. 20: 4, for our authority. He turned to the Pentateuch, and read the second commandment with evident satisfaction, as a triumphant argument against the Chaldean. The occasion was embraced to declare to the company many particulars respecting the image-worship of the papists, especially as practised at Malta, most of which were new and surprising to them. The bishop manifested the deepest interest in the whole conversation, and all but the Chaldean seemed highly delighted.

It was to us, also, an evening of the most intense gratification. I had never found among the native Christians of Western Asia, any who would go such lengths with me in arguing against the papists. To see that the passages of Scripture appealed to in proof of arguments were so well understood, was likewise pleasing. In fact, in all our intercourse with the Nestorians, their frequent and

generally correct quotations from Scripture were quite noticeable. They seemed to feel its force as a standard of ultimate appeal. And it is a striking fact, that, with the exception of one reference to the Apostolical Canons, no resort was had at all to the authority of Fathers and Councils. We were also not sorry to give countenance, by such an argument, to the Nestorians in opposition to the Chaldeans. For the latter seemed always to announce themselves as Roman Catholics with a tone of self-congratulation for their orthodoxy, and assurance that we would esteem them the more for it. While the Nestorians declared their sentiments with diffidence, as if they expected a frown from every body, and especially from Europeans, for their heresy. It was not unimportant to show them, that they are not alone in their disapprobation of papacy.

March 17. I have mentioned that we left Tebriz with the intention of performing the circuit of the lake of Oormiah. We were extremely anxious to extend our journey into the heart of the Kürdish mountains, and visit in person Mar Shimón and the independent Nestorians. But all our English friends at Tebriz united in declaring that region entirely inaccessible. Not that among the Nestorians themselves, we should not be well received and be perfectly safe, but the Kürds which surround them are treacherous and blood-thirsty robbers, entirely beyond the control of the Persian government. Dr. Schultz, a learned German, travelling under the auspices of the king of France, had lately succeeded in reaching Kochannes; and the patriarch and his people treated him well; but on his return, he was murdered by the very guard which had been given him by a Kürdish beg for his protection. The impracticability of entering the mountains was affirmed also at Khósrova, at Ada, and at other places among the Nestorians; and even Mérgaver, the nearest mountainous district to Ardishai, was said to have recently defied the power of the governor of

Oormiah. We learned also that the Kürds around Sool-dooz, at the southern extremity of the lake, were in a state of insubordination, which very much endangered the passage by that route. The existence of the plague at Marágha had already made us begin to doubt the expediency of continuing in that direction; and this additional obstacle now completed our decision to return by the way that we had come. To vary the route a little, we determined to-day to turn to the west of the main road from Oormiah to Salmás, about as far as Ada is to the east of it, and visit another Nestorian bishop named Oorahám (Abraham) at Armood-agháj.

We left Ardishai at an early hour, and for awhile took the direct road to Oormiah. To avoid the plague, however, we refused to go through it, and only passed along in sight of its walls. The plain maintained in this direction its general character for beauty and fertility, and as we passed across several ploughed fields, we were made more sensible of the lightness of its soil by the depth to which our horses sunk into it at every step. Vineyards were numerous in every part, and like the gardens were invariably inclosed by a wall, while nothing separated the fields of grain from the open common. Both the vineyards and the gardens generally contained small houses, which reminded us of Matt. 21 : 33, and Is. 1 : 8, and we asked our guide this morning what was their object. He replied that they afford shelter and lodgings in the summer, to persons who defend the vineyards and gardens from thieves, and cultivate them and gather the vintage.

Armood-agháj is a very small village, inhabited, in about equal numbers, by moslems and Nestorians, lying near the foot of the mountains on the northern side of the plain about two fúrsakhs from Oormiah, and five from Ardishai. The bishop was absent in a distant village, and though urged to stop while his family should send for him, we preferred

seeking for better accommodations in the larger village of Koosy, about a mile distant. We were received at Koosy, into a room similar in size and appearance to that which we had occupied at Ardishai, and the people treated us, as did the Nestorians generally, with hospitality, attention and respect. Fewer assembled, than at the last two villages, to visit and converse with us; but they were not without their complaints. Our host affirmed that government exacts from him 20 tománs per annum for his family, and two thirds of the produce of his farm!

At evening prayers, we were pained by an unusual share of that want of reverence for sacred things, which was generally observable among the Nestorians, both in church and in conversation upon religious topics. The ceremonies differed little from what has been elsewhere noticed. Incense was burned; the officiators wore only their ordinary dress, except the sash and the band for the left shoulder used by the deacon in reading the Psalter, which were in this instance ornamented by several crosses; and each one as he entered, kissed the cross, the hand of the bishop, and of his fellow-worshippers. The women, who had in every church occupied the farther extremity and never came forward to perform this ceremony, were observed here to have a cross suspended upon the wall near them, which they kissed on entering, and then did the same to the hands of each other.

The priest followed us to our room, and spent the evening; but we found him capable of giving but little information. He confessed that he was but eighteen years of age, and we judged from his appearance that he was no more than sixteen. His father, who was the former priest, had died the year before of the epidemic, and he had been ordained since. Not that the office of priest is hereditary, for all agreed that it is not; but the choice of the village, which alone determined the succession, happened to fall

upon him. They confirmed the fact, that the episcopate is hereditary, and mentioned the see of Nazy, a village not far distant, which is at present vacant, in consequence of the heir's being too young to receive ordination, and not having yet completed his studies.

I have already mentioned that we found no printed books among the Nestorians, and suggested that their alphabet has perhaps never been printed. We inquired in every place for books, but, with the exception of the grammar at Ardishai, we found only the books of the church; and they were very scarce. The Psalter, the Gospels, and Epistles, in separate volumes, and divided into lessons for the daily service, were possessed by every church; but in Jamálava the two latter were carried every night to the house of the bishop, for fear that they would be stolen. Two churches also possessed the Pentateuch; but no entire copy of the Bible was heard of any where. Indeed the Chaldean priest at Khósrova confessed that one is hardly to be found. He possessed it himself only in the Syriac of Walton's Polyglott, a work which he had procured, we understood him to say, because the entire Bible does not exist in the Nestorian character. He assured us, that the Nestorian catalogues of the books held to be canonical, embrace precisely the same that are acknowledged by the papal church. We asked only a few questions on this point; but the bishop at Jamálava informed us that the Apocalypse, the epistle of James, and Solomon's song, are among the books received by them as canonical. Some of their manuscripts were fine specimens of the Estrangelo; especially two, which were copies of the Gospels and Epistles, in the possession of Mar Gabriel of Ardishai. But an extreme unwillingness was universally manifested to part with any, except the Psalter, for the alleged reason that only one copy was owned by a village. The missal of the church at Koosy had been recently stolen, and the priest was consequently un-

able to celebrate the eucharist. We finally succeeded in purchasing at Jamálava a copy of the Psalter in the Nestorian character, and another of the epistles in the Estrangelo. The latter was written in 1527 of the era of the Seleucidæ, which is still used by the Nestorians, and commences 311 years before Christ.*

We inquired at Koosy, as usual, for manuscripts, and were told that the village possesses a very venerable one, written, according to the date inserted by the writer, three hundred years before the Mohammedan era. We had heard of its fame at Ardishai, and at our request to see it were conducted to the house of the priest where it was kept. He crossed himself, and the by-standers uncovered their heads, as he opened the box which contained it; and ten silk bags and handkerchiefs which covered it, were then carefully removed one by one. It proved to be a neat and well preserved copy of the New Testament upon parchment, in small Estrangelo characters. After examining it awhile, without touching it, we returned to our lodgings. In proof of its great sanctity and miraculous virtues, the company affirmed that even the moslems believe in it; for they not only bring Christians from distant villages to swear upon it, in order to obtain from them a true oath, but are even afraid to swear falsely by it themselves. When asked for the reason of such a fear, they declared that the falsity of an oath is detected at the time, by a miraculous moving of the leaves of the book, and afterward death, or some terrible calamity, invariably befalls the false swearer or his nearest friends. Many instances of such effects of its miraculous powers had been known by them, and they confessed that so great was their fear that they trembled to speak of it. We inquired if any other manuscripts of a similar antiquity are possessed by their countrymen, and

* These manuscripts are now deposited in the Library of the Board at the Missionary Rooms.

were answered, that there are many in the mountains, one of which is not very far distant, in the district of Gárvar. They affirmed that it is not so venerable as this, but immediately, as if afraid of defaming it, modified the expression by saying, that nothing however could be said against that.—Our offers to purchase such an adored manuscript, were of course not listened to a moment. Other books were brought forward ; but as they had only a single copy of each for their own use, none could be bought.

March 18. We left at an early hour for Jamálava, distant about five fúrsakhs. After four or five miles we were hailed and stopped by a man in pursuit of us. It was Mar Oorahám of Armood-agháj, who, it appeared, had been sent for yesterday by his friends to a village a fúrsakh or two distant, contrary to our injunction. Finding, on reaching home this morning, that we were gone, he had pushed on after us. His first words confirmed our fears that he supposed us to be political agents. The Nestorians, he said, were the last Christians left in the hands of the moslems ; their oppressions had become so great that they could be endured no longer ; and they were determined to leave the country. Would not the kings assist them ? We replied that we were simple ministers of the gospel, and had no connection with such subjects, nor any information respecting them. ‘They told me,’ said he, ‘near Ada, where you passed, that you travelled under the name of Englishmen, but were really Russians ; are you not Russians ?’ We assured him we were not, and that he would oblige us by contradicting such a report : that we were ministers of the gospel, who, having come from a very distant land, were now among the Nestorians on a religious visit. Immediately he expressed his regret that we had not found him at home, as he should have taken great pleasure in answering our inquiries, and if we wanted books, he had them. We were ourselves sorry not to have

more time with him, for he seemed the most intelligent Nestorian bishop we had seen. He was mounted on a good horse, was well dressed in the usual Kürdish costume, had a sword hung by his side, and a bishop's staff in his hand.

When speaking of books, he took from his saddle-bags a copy of the *Takhsa* and *Sünhedüs*. The former, he said, contained the offices for the eucharist, for ordination, and for the consecration of churches; the three functions which a bishop is most liable to be called upon to perform: the ordination of the five grades below him, and the consecration of churches, being in fact his peculiar duties. The canons of his church, he assured us, require the eucharist to be celebrated every Sunday and Friday throughout the year. It is actually celebrated, every day in three out of the seven weeks of lent, every Sunday and festival generally, and whenever a baptism is to be performed or a mass is required for the dead. As a preparation for communion, they practise not that confession, he said, in which sins are told in the ear of a priest and money is given; but if a man's conscience is burdened, he sometimes goes, of his own accord, to his priest, and tells him he is a sinner. He then fasts three days in the church, praying and putting ashes under him; and on the morning of the eucharist, the priest, laying his hand upon his head, reads over him an absolution. The communion is then administered to him. —The *Sünhedüs*, he said, contains all the laws and canons of the church, and by it a bishop can decide any question that is liable to come before him. In the case of a proposed marriage, for example, he can determine from it whether the parties are within the forbidden grades of consanguinity; which are, he affirmed, in the Nestorian church sixty-five in number, including, as I understood, some grades of the affinity that exists between sponsors and god-children. The same book contains also the law which

allows priests to marry after ordination; 'for,' said he, 'we do not understand the passage which intimates that an elder should be the husband of one wife, (Tit. 1: 6.) as limiting the number that he may have successively, but as prohibiting him to have more than one at a time.' We concluded, from his description, that the Sünhedüs contains most of the peculiarities of the Nestorian church, and were very desirous of purchasing it, but he would sell neither it nor the Takhsa.—In the course of the conversation, he forced upon us a present of a large quantity of raisins, which he had brought in his saddle-bags. We happened at the moment to pay our guide a penabád for his services, and were embarrassed to see the bishop take it with a smile of thanks, as if it were intended for himself. It seemed doubtful, however, whether an apology was most due from us for giving, or from him for receiving so small a gratuity, and we suffered him to put it quietly in his pocket.

Our friends at Jamálava seemed rejoiced to see us among them again; but the bishop, with whom we had conversed so much a week before, was absent. The eucharist had not been celebrated in any of the churches we had visited, and we expressed to the priest our regret at not having an opportunity to witness the ceremony. He said that to gratify us it should be performed to-morrow, though otherwise it would not have occurred until Sunday morning.

March 19. We were awaked when the priest went to church at early dawn. Himself and a younger son, who officiated as deacon, were three when we entered, saying prayers alone, and only two or three others came in after awhile. He soon sent word to us, that, as they were only saying the morning prayers which were long, we should do well to return to our room, and he would call us in time to witness the mass. After somewhat more than an hour, a messenger informed us that it was begun. As we entered,

a curtain was withdrawn from the door of the sanctuary, and the priest, with his son the deacon, appeared within. He was clothed in a white flowing robe with sleeves; a dark colored fillet around his loins answered as a sash; and a second one was passed around his neck and tucked under the other in front. A white mantle, consisting apparently of only a plain piece of cotton or silk cloth, so long as to trail upon the floor, and so broad as to cover his hands when they were raised in supplication, was soon thrown over his shoulders, and completed his dress. The dress of the deacon was similar, except that he had not the mantle, and instead of the fillet around the neck, a plain white band was passed over his right shoulder and tucked under the sash before and behind. Their heads were bare during the whole ceremony; and their robes altogether were extremely simple, and not unbecoming.

While chanting the service, they walked continually about the sanctuary, the deacon burning incense, and the priest repeatedly making prostrations on either side and then directly in front of the altar, approaching it kneeling and kissing the ground at every step, and finally kissing the altar itself as he reached it. Besides occasionally responding, the people in the body of the church took no part in the services, except that the deacon came forward once and touched the hands of one of them, and then the kissing of hands passed around the company. At length a curtain, being dropped before the sanctuary, hid the officiators from our view, and a bell commenced ringing within, which nearly drowned the chanting. At the signal of a smaller bell, the whole congregation crossed themselves, and bowed their heads, a minute or two, in silent adoration. The curtain was soon removed, and the priest advanced to the door of the sanctuary with the Gospel, and read it to the people by the light of a candle held by the deacon. He seemed occasionally to chant a verse, and then to read

an explanation of it in his natural tone. The people carefully uncovered their heads, and listened with the greatest reverence; and though no notice was taken of our neglecting to imitate them in their other ceremonies, they now expressed dissatisfaction that one of us should remain with his head covered, saying to him that it was the Gospel. Immediately after, the priest brought out the bread in a napkin, a part of which was passed around his neck, and the deacon brought out the wine in a metal bowl with a napkin under it, which hung down in front. Each communicant in succession stood before the priest, who broke off a bit of the bread and put it into his mouth, while he held his hand open under his chin to catch any crumbs of the consecrated element that might chance to fall. Then standing in like manner before the deacon, each drank from the bowl in his hand, wiping his mouth afterward upon the napkin that hung in front to remove any drops that might have adhered to his lips or his beard, and then returned to his place with his hand upon his mouth. One or two children went up, and partook of the bread and not of the wine. A passage (perhaps a hymn) chanted from the Takhsa by the priest, succeeded, and the ceremony was closed by his pronouncing the blessing. He soon brought the remnants of the bread to the door of the baptistry, and there ate them with several who had communicated. The whole occupied just an hour. We saw nothing of any confession or absolution read to the people, but it may have been done before we arrived. The only parts of the service addressed to the assembly, while we were there, were the lesson from the Gospel, the passage chanted from the Takhsa, and the blessing. The whole was much more simple than any mass we had ever attended; and in the mode of communion at the end, almost a scriptural simplicity might be recognized.

We left Jamálava immediately after these ceremonies

were concluded, and reached Tebriz again in health on the 23d of March.

Permit me to add to this report of our visit to the Nestorians, some considerations respecting the expediency of establishing a mission in this part of Persia.—We have little to say, in addition to the account already given of the Persian *moslems*, to enable you to judge what would be the prospects of a mission established specially for them. Such a mission we are not prepared decidedly to recommend; though our persuasion is strong, that a missionary, while directing his attention expressly and primarily to the Christian population, would find many occasions and means of doing good to the followers of Mohammed also, as a secondary branch of labor.—The *Armenian* population is so small and dispersed that any considerable number could with difficulty be reached; not to mention another certainly important consideration—their extreme degradation. In hesitating to recommend these two classes of people as promising objects of missionary labor in Persia, we are of course to be understood as declining to propose the city of Tebriz for a missionary station.—But to the *Nestorians* of Oormiah we would specially direct your attention. That Abbas Mirza would, without doubt, patronize missionary efforts for their improvement, and in fact for the improvement of all his Christian subjects, we received the unanimous testimony of all the members of the English embassy. Equally decided assurance was given us that missionary families in Oormiah, would be secure from any oppression; for besides being favorably regarded by the prince, the ambassador also would protect them. Among others who accorded with these sentiments, were two gentlemen, who had resided some time in that province; and one of them added that the climate is very fine. Our own impression respecting the climate, from the location of the district and the dampness and fertility of its soil, is that it must, at certain seasons of

the year, be hot and productive of febrile affections. To the hostile incursions of the predatory Kürds, too, it seems to us evident that Oormiah must be exposed, whenever the government of Persia is disturbed by either internal or foreign causes. But we must not calculate too closely the chances of life. Missionaries to any part of the great field—the world, should ever go forth with a martyr's spirit, 'hazarding their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

That religious instruction is needed by the Nestorians, this and the preceding letter will have sufficiently convinced you. How it would be received by them, experiment alone can fully determine. We cannot but refer you, however, to their extreme liberality toward other sects, their ideas of open communion, and their entire rejection of auricular confession, (that efficient police system of the other old churches,) as considerations which have produced in our minds a firm conviction, that a mission to the Nestorians would meet with far fewer obstacles, than among any other of the old churches. The week that we passed among them was among the most intensely interesting of our lives. For myself, I felt a stronger desire to settle among them at once as a missionary, than among any people I have ever seen. A mission family there would indeed be lonely. Its nearest European acquaintances would be the English at Tebriz, about a hundred miles distant; and even they will remain at that city no longer than it is the seat of Abbas Mirza's government. Among the natives, there would be no intelligent society. If the notions of the Nestorians are like those of the Armenians at Shoosha and Tebriz, of which there is little doubt, no female domestics even could be obtained. Great facilities for communication with home by letter would be afforded through the English embassy, which receives an express by a tartar from Constantinople, and returns one, about once a month. The dis-

tance, which is eleven or twelve hundred miles, is usually performed in eighteen or twenty days. Boxes would come expeditiously and safely from Constantinople, by way of Trebizond and Erzroom, making a land carriage from Trebizond of five or six hundred miles.

Self-denying indeed, and laborious would be the lot of a missionary in Oormiah. But let him enter the field with the self-devotion which reconciled Brainerd to a wigwam, and inspired Martyn with that noble sentiment—"Even if I never should see a native converted, God may design by my patience and continuance in the work to encourage future missionaries"—and contentment also will be a portion of his cup. And as he plants one truth after another in the mind of an ignorant Nestorian, and sees it take root and bear fruit, thus restoring to the oldest of Christian sects 'the faith once delivered to the saints,' and beginning the conquests of Christianity in a kingdom where it has never triumphed, a joy which the world knows not of will likewise be his. He will feel, also, the advantage of his position; that he has found a prop upon which to rest the lever that will overturn the whole system of Mohammedan delusion, in the centre of which he has fixed himself; that he is lighting a fire which will shine out upon the corruptions of the Persian on the one side, and upon the barbarities of the Kùrd on the other, until all shall come to be enlightened by its brightness; and the triumph of faith will crown his labor of love.

LETTER XXII.

FROM TEBRIZ TO KARA-KELEESEH.

Leave Tebriz—Precaution against robbers from Khoy—Enter the country of the Kürds—Arts of our guide at Zoraba—And at Keleeseh—Cross the Turkish frontier—Bayezeed—Diadeen—Uch-keleeseh, or Soorp Garabéd—Incivility of the Kürds—Peculiar doctrines of the Armenians respecting the nature of Christ—Habits of the wandering Kürds—Pastoral observations—Kara-keleeseh.

DEAR SIR,

BEING unable on our return from Oormiah to obtain any satisfactory information from Bagdád, we determined to move toward Constantinople, by the usual caravan route through Bayezeed to Erzroom. We at first engaged horses to accompany a large caravan; but they were seized by government for the transportation of army stores, and our contract of course failed. The disappointment was fortunate, however, for the motions of the caravan were so slow, that we actually reached Erzroom many days before it. Horses were next engaged to take us alone to Bayezeed in seven days. With them we left Tebriz on the 9th of April, and on the 11th reached Khoy, by the route which has been already described.

April 12. The acting British envoy had the kindness to furnish us, on leaving Tebriz, with letters to the authorities at Khoy. We caused them to be presented yesterday, with a petition for passports and a guide to Bayezeed. The passports were given on the spot, and the guide promised in the morning; but it was late to-day before he presented himself. He was a *ghoolám*, or page, of the

prince, and a complete Persian in politeness and duplicity, but was small and young. The part he was to act, however, required neither courage nor strength. The road from Khoy to Bayezeed is not beset by openly lawless banditti, or a regular guard would have been necessary. The only risk is a slight one from Kürdish borderers in crossing the frontier; and we took this attendant as an insurance in case of accident from them. For his presence made the Persian government responsible for whatever might befall ourselves or our property.

We left Khoy at a quarter before 11 A. M. and at 1 P. M. reached the extremity of the plain, just beyond the village of Peh. In the warm recesses at the foot of the mountains were a number of black tents of Kürds. They were just leaving their winter-quarters in the villages of the plain, and beginning to ascend the mountains for their nomadic summer residence. The mountains before us might be considered the eastern boundary of the country of the Kürds, being entirely overrun in the summer by their flocks. They are here subject indeed to the Persian government, and in the parts nearest Khoy contain some moslem villages of the Turkish language and of the sheey faith; but extending southward between the lakes of Oormiah and Van, they become more exclusively the possession of the Kürds; and finally in the Hakáry country are entirely independent. Our ascent of them was gradual but long. An arable tract succeeded, with some villages upon it. At the farthest of them, named 'Zoraba, we stopped at a quarter past 6 P. M. having made five fúrsakhs.

A room was prepared for us at the direction of our guide; who claimed, also, to act as *mihmandár*, and provide not only lodgings but food for us gratis. We had been cautioned against such a mode of entertainment, as being offensive to the people, and in the end troublesome to the traveller; and therefore informed him, that we had applied for

merely a guide, and if the prince had clothed him with the powers of a mihmandár, it was indeed an act of kindness, but one which we felt at liberty to decline, and we should pursue our usual course of ordering our own dinner and paying for it. He took it ill that we entertained so low ideas of his own importance and of the prince's hospitality, as to suppose that he had been sent merely to conduct us; and not to be wholly divested of his assumed character, he ordered four or five fowls for himself, and food for our muleteers and their horses. But the supper and the honor of the office, were not all he sought. He should give the kékkhoda, he said, a written acknowledgment for perhaps double the value of what was consumed, which would be accepted at the prince's treasury in lieu of taxes to that amount from the village. What was gained by the embezzlement would be divided between them.

April 13. We started at a quarter after 5 A. M. and travelled the whole day over mountains, with the exception of one plain about midway five or six miles in extent. Several villages appeared upon it, and the structure of their houses showed that we were leaving the Persian part of Armenia. Instead of naked mud walls, they had walls of stone half buried beneath the ground, in the style we had noticed on first approaching Erzroom, and which now continued from hence to that city. The mountains retained the striking feature, common to all we saw in Persia, of entire nakedness of tree or shrub; but they assumed more of the swelling form of those around Erzroom, and were adapted to afford an immense extent of pasturage. We found upon the higher parts extensive and deep banks of snow; and it snowed for several hours the early part of the day.

Toward evening we crossed another elevated plain, perhaps eight miles long, with snow still lying upon it in several places, and at 6 P. M. stopped at a village on its farther side, 10 fúrsakhs from Zoraba. It is named *Ke-*

leesch, or the church, from the ruins of an old church around which it is built. Its former inhabitants were Armenians; but they had emigrated to the Russian provinces, and it was now occupied by a few poor moslem families from Eriván. They completely disregarded the authority of our guide; and after scolding long, and threatening them with the wrath of the prince to the complete destruction of their village, he was unable to procure us even a room. We applied money instead of threats, and obtained whatever we wanted; not, however, without a serious complaint from him, that we were paying the villagers what was his own perquisite. For he now confessed that he expected, in addition to the embezzlement already alluded to, to receive himself at the end of the journey, for providing for us gratis, what we should otherwise have paid to those who entertained us. Such, he said, is one of the ways in which the prince pays his servants; and it proved that our muleteers actually paid him last night, instead of our host, for their horses' barley and straw.

April 14. Leaving Keleeseh at half past 5 A. M. we ascended and rode for an hour or two over a high and dreary mountain, covered almost entirely with deep snow. It is perhaps the Niphates of the Greeks, and forms, we supposed, the boundary between Persia and Turkey; for the village where we spent the night is in Persia, and the next place is Bayezeed in Turkey. It was not an unfit place for border tales; and on its top five or six Persians from the district of Ovajík, stopped us to complain, that the men of Bayezeed had stolen from them cattle to the amount of 500 tománs, besides inducing five or six villages of their Armenian neighbors to remove into the Turkish territory. They had plead for redress at Bayezeed, they said, in vain; and now begged that we, as *elchies* (embassadors), would present their case to their consul at Erzroom. We descended, at 8 o'clock, into the head of a plain extending to the west,

and crossed a small stream running also in that direction, being probably one of the first branches of the Murád-chai. Turning northward, we were in full view of the back of mount Ararat, and apparently near it. It presented much the same aspect as when viewed from the valley of the Aras. The foot of it on this side is inhabited by a small body of that singular sect, the Yezeedies, reputed worshippers of Satan. They number about 300 families, and inhabit three villages, one of which is named Kara-boolák.

Continuing northward over a few barren hills, we came in sight of Bayezeed. It hangs romantically upon the side of a rugged precipice, which rises some distance above it. A citadel, containing a well-built mosk and the pashá's extensive palace, occupies a lofty projection at the top. Westward extends a broad plain, which, according to an intelligent vartabéd at Uch-keleeseh, once formed a part of the Armenian canton of Gokaiovíd. If so, the mountain which now separates Persia from Turkey, was anciently the western boundary of Vasbooragán, and we are again in the province of Ararád.* We entered the town at 11 A. M. It was in a miserable, ruined state, and we saw not one decent house besides the pashá's. Most of them were constructed like the under-ground cabins of the villages; the streets were obstructed by every species of filth; and nearly all the shops in the bazár, originally but very few, were deserted. The Russians had left behind them the same desolation as at Erzroom and at Kars.

The Armenians of Bayezeed are said once to have been numerous, but now there are only about 190 families of that nation. Their school has not been revived since the war. They have five priests, but no bishop; nor had they formerly one of their own, their town being included in the diocese of the bishop of Tateós Arakeál. The moslem inhabitants amount to only three or four hundred families.

* St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 108.

They are nearly all Kürds, Kürdish is the common language of the place, and in fact, the whole pashalik of which it is the capital forms an integral part of Kürdistán. The pashá himself is of a native Kürdish family; but he receives his commands, if not his office, from the pashá of Erzroom, and has only the rank of two tails. His subordination seems now to be complete, and he no longer dares act the robber, as when M. Jaubert was here so long imprisoned, and so cruelly treated. Soldiers of the Sultán's new discipline were manœuvring with drum and fife in his citadel, and his own son was exercising himself in the European tactics. He was now absent on a visit to his superior at Erzroom, but his kakhia received our fermáns with great respect; a tartar was immediately provided to conduct us safely to Erzroom; and, no regular posts having yet been established since the war, an order was offered us for horses from village to village. We accepted the tartar for the same reason that we had taken a guide from Khoy—to make the government responsible in case of accident; but fearing trouble in procuring the horses we declined the order for them, and hired caravan horses for the whole distance.

April 15. We left Bayezeed at a quarter before 8 A. M. and directed our course westward through the plain. In about an hour a small stream crossed our path, running to the right. It passes, we were told, around the Magoo side of mount Ararat, and empties into the Aras between that mountain and Nakhcheván. It is probably the Dughmood of the Armenians, and the Ak-chai of the Turks,* though we did not learn its present name. Our prospect was extremely limited by fog and rain, but what we saw of the country was most desolate; not a village, nor hardly any cultivation appeared the whole day. Deep mud, caused by the storm, impeded our progress; one of our horses,

* St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 41.

all of which proved to be miserable, failed entirely before we had accomplished half the stage; and our tartar, (himself a Kürd, in nation, language and manners,) occasionally pointed to heaps of stones upon graves along the road, to remind us how many murders had here been committed by Kürdish robbers. We finally crossed a small mountain, covered with snow of some depth, a part of which had fallen during the day, and descended to Diadeen, having accomplished six Turkish hours in nine.

A miserable ride was followed by more miserable accommodations. Diadeen, if we may credit the information of the vartabéd at Uch-keleeseh alluded to at Bayezeed, occupies the site of the ancient Zarehavan (Zarvana), a town of some note in the history of Armenia. The modern village was until recently a place of some importance, and contained many Armenian families with about forty shops. It has now the ruins of a walled citadel, which are occupied by a *mütsellim*, or governor. All the Christians, except three families, retired with the Russians, and only twenty or thirty poor moslem families occupy a few dilapidated cabins. They are all of Kürdish descent, and speak the Kürdish language. We found a corner in the house of an old Kürd, which sheltered us from the storm, but was exceedingly small and dirty.

April 16. Diadeen stands on the northern bank of the eastern branch of the Euphrates, now called *Murád-chai*, or the river of Murád. After waiting awhile in the morning for the rain to cease, and for our muleteer to exchange his worn-out horse for one more serviceable, we started, and followed the uncultivated and deserted valley of the river westward to Uch-keleeseh, a distance of three hours. It is on the south side of the river, and, a few rods before reaching it, though the stream was swollen by the rain, a bridge of only three or four logs covered with weeds and earth conducted us over without difficulty.

We spent the remainder of the 16th, and the next day which was the Sabbath, at Uch-keleeseh. It is a convent of the Armenians, and is named by them *Soorp Garabéd* (the holy forerunner) after John the baptist, of whom it contains a relic. This relic, however, the monks allowed, does not give to their convent so much notoriety, as has been imparted to another near Moosh dedicated to the same saint, by a relic of him inclosed in a tomb, which has been a great object of pilgrimage. The circumstance which contributes most to its celebrity is, that it stands, according to the traditions of the nation, on the spot where St. Gregory baptized king Durtád. Its inmates assured us, that the church which is now standing, was built by the saint himself 1525 years ago, just after that event. It is an extremely solid fabric of hewn stone, in the best ancient style of the country, with arches and vaults of fine proportions, and surpasses in size any Armenian church we had seen. Though evidently old, every part was in good preservation; but an almost entire absence of carpets, lamps, and every species of furniture and ornament, made it appear naked and poor. It stands at the base of an isolated mountain, and is surrounded by a high wall.

Being a usual station for the numerous travellers and caravans that pass between Tebriz and Erzroom, accommodations answering to a caravanserai had been fitted up on the outside. We were not honored with an invitation to lodge within, and slept in an apartment connected with a stable. A Kürdish officer of the pashá, stationed here to secure the establishment from depredations, together with our tartar and muleteer, both likewise Kürds, claimed to share in our accommodations. But by attempering decision with fair words, we finally rid ourselves of them all. Perhaps a recent familiarity with Persian politeness made us more sensitive to the boorishness of the Kürds: but

we received the distinct impression, that we never met with a more uncivil people.

This convent is well known in the history of Armenian monasticism, and was for a time in the beginning of the present century the residence of a Catholicos who attempted to supplant the occupant of the see of Echmiádzin. No bishop now resides in it, and it is inhabited by only five vartabéds and a few deacons. They confessed that its former large income from pilgrims who stopped here on their way to Echmiádzin, and from its own glebes, has now almost entirely ceased. It owns several districts, but the emigration to the Russian territories had stripped them of tenants and of cattle, and, with the exception of what is raised by a few laborers, they remain unproductive. The superior represented that this emigration was effected by much urging and force, on the part of the invaders. They carried him, he affirmed, as far as Echmiádzin, saying that unless led by him, the people would not remove. Nearly all the Armenians have gone from these parts, and there is now no school in the convent nor in the whole region around.

We had much conversation with the vartabéds on several topics, most of which have been already exhibited. One or two only have been reserved for this place. An allusion has been made in the Introduction to the commencement of the monophysite error among the Armenians, in consequence of which they were cut off from the general church, and have ever been regarded by the papists and the Greeks as heretical. A few seem to have escaped the heresy, and retain until the present time their connection with the oriental Greek church. For there now exists a small body of orthodox Armenians at Agn, on the western bank of the Euphrates to the north of Arabkir. We met one of them at Echmiádzin. He was a banker, and one of the most gentlemanly Armenians

we have seen. He informed us that his native place was 30 hours from Diarbekr, 30 from Sivás, and 16 from Maaden. In its vicinity are five villages, whose inhabitants speak the Armenian language, but are of the Greek church, and have a bishop of their own who is subject to the Greek patriarch of Constantinople. They formerly enjoyed many immunities, he said, from the Turkish government. But the Russians, when at Erzroom, induced them to rise, and they had since suffered much persecution. Another informant declares, that their church books are in Armenian, and when on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, they often prefer, in opposition to the wishes of the Greeks, to attend the Armenian services, because they understand them, while of the Greek they can comprehend nothing. The little clan of *Aguntsi*, or Armenians of Agn, are well known in the nation, and are especially celebrated as bankers. Some of them are among the wealthiest of that profession in Constantinople. We heard of no other Armenians belonging to the Greek church.*

One of the vartabéds here seemed much better informed than the rest, and as we were conversing upon various topics, he introduced of his own accord the monophysitism of his church, by declaring that it receives only the first three of the general councils. Nestorius, he said, held to a perfect separation of the divinity and humanity of Christ,

* Though the Syrian nation, almost as generally as the Armenian, has been infected with heresy, either monophysite or Nestorian, a remnant of that too seems to have preserved its orthodoxy. We met at Shoosha a poor Syrian priest, who was begging aid to redeem his children, who had been seized by the Persians and sold into slavery at Van. His native village, he said, was Bzey, 8 days from Bagdád. He assured us that he was of the orthodox Greek church, and that in his vicinity in Mesopotamia there are six villages of the same faith. Their church service is in Syriac, which was likewise his native tongue, though he spoke also Arabic and Turkish imperfectly. They are subject to the Greek patriarch at Damascus, who is now the orthodox incumbent of the see of Antioch.

and Eutyches taught that his humanity is absorbed in his divinity; the Armenians, agreeing with neither, believe that the two natures are united in one, and anathematize all who hold to a different creed. In this he spoke advisedly, for it is well known that Eutyches is acknowledged by neither of the three monophysite sects, the Armenian, the Jacobite Syrian, and the Coptic including the Abyssinian, to which his controversy gave birth; and that his alleged dogma of a confusion in the natures of Christ is the reason of his rejection, though perhaps a candid investigation will hardly find him chargeable with such an opinion.* Another intelligent ecclesiastic had told us, that not only does his nation hold to one nature, but also to only one will in Christ, thus making the Armenians partake in the monothelite as well as in the monophysite heresy.†

We inquired of the vartabéd if his sect does not believe that Christ was perfect God and perfect man, and were assured that it does. Here too he had good authority, for the Armenian church believes and explains, as fully as any other, these two important points.‡ When asked, also, if the divine nature was so united to the human, as to suffer with it on the cross, he replied that it is impossible for the divinity to suffer. But in this, though his church would agree with his explanation, he seemed at least to contradict her formularies; for Peter the Fuller's famous addition to the *trisagion* is still retained in them, and had been mentioned to us by another ecclesiastic, as one of the points of difference between the Armenians and the papists.

Perhaps you need to be told what the *trisagion* is. The following is a Latin version of the Greek account of it. "On the 24th of September, in the reign of Theodosius,

* Assem. Bib. Orient. vol. 2: intro. dissert. Mosheim, Eccl. Hist. vol. 1: p. 438, ed. Murdock.

† Compare Assem. Bib. Orient. vol. 3: p. 607.

‡ Armeno-Turkish Catechism, p. 4, ss.

(A. D. 446,) a great earthquake happened, such as is not recorded to have ever occurred before. So incessantly did the earth continue to be shaken, that all the people, with the emperor and the patriarch, went out of the city to a place called *Campus*. While the emperor Theodosius, the patriarch Proclus, and all the people, were there imploring the divine aid with supplications and litanies, suddenly a little boy from the midst of the crowd was caught up into the air. As all for fear cried out *Kyrie eleison* [Lord have mercy], the boy descended, and addressing the people with a loud voice, required that the *trisagion* should thus be sung; *O holy God, holy strong, and holy immortal, have mercy upon us*. Having thus said, he gave up his soul to God, and the earthquake ceased.”* So supernatural and so effectual a prayer soon obtained universal currency in the church; it has retained a place until the present time in the liturgies of several sects, and is still held in the highest veneration.

An addition was made to it by the monophysite Peter the Fuller, of Antioch, which laid him open to the charge of holding that the divinity was crucified; and, being adopted by the Armenians, has caused them to be regarded by other sects as fosterers of that heresy.† It occurs several times in services of their church in the following terms: “Holy God, and holy strong, and holy immortal, *who wast crucified for us*, have mercy upon us.” In accordance with this expression, the vartabéd went on to say, notwithstanding his previous admission that God cannot suffer, that the divinity and the humanity of Christ were elevated upon the cross together, and both descended into the grave and remained there with the body. The latter assertion seemed countenanced by the clause in the creed already quoted, which says, “His body was placed in the grave

* Summa Conciliorum, p. 388.

† Assem. Bib. Orient. vol. 2: intro. dissert.

with the divinity united." To our surprise, he added a declaration which seemed to go the whole length of the old Julianist error of the incorruptibility of the body of our Savior;* saying, that had it remained in the grave, it would never have decayed. That such is the doctrine of his church, he attempted to show by arguing that unleavened bread is used in her eucharist, rather as a symbol that no leaven of corruption was found in the body of Christ, than because our Savior first used it at the institution of the ordinance, that being a mere Jewish custom; and he would fain confirm it from the Bible also, by quoting the expression, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, *neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*"

To complete our view of the heresies respecting the Trinity charged upon the Armenians, it must be added, that though they believe in the eternal generation of the Son, and the eternal procession of the Spirit, firmly enough to satisfy the warmest admirers of the fathers,† they adhere to the favorite notion of the Greeks, in opposition to the Latins, that the Spirit proceeds from the Father only.—In this single case of the vartabéd only, during our whole journey, were these topics introduced by any with whom we conversed, unless in answer to our inquiries. The missionaries at Shoosha, also, assured us that they have rarely been advanced in their hearing, and have in no way interfered with or hindered their evangelical efforts among the Armenians. Add to these facts the nature of the subjects themselves, and I am persuaded you will agree with me, that missionaries may convert the whole nation to 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' without feeling themselves once called upon to agitate the questions, which, in the times of the first councils, rent the church asunder.

We availed ourselves of the vartabéd's declaration, that

* See Assem. Bib. Orient. vol. 2: intro. dissert. and p. 296.

† Armeno-Turkish Catechism, p. 4, 12.

the deity and the human soul of Christ remained in the grave with his body, to ask him how his church can say in her creed, that Christ preached to the spirits in hades; and also reminded him of its equal inconsistency with the promise in Scripture, that the penitent thief should be with Christ in paradise, (which we know from 2 Cor. 12: 2, 4, is in the third heaven,) on the day of his crucifixion. He seemed willing to pass over the notion he had advanced, and which, so far as related to the human soul of Christ, was probably simply his own; and called upon *us* to reconcile Scripture with the creed, by explaining how Christ could have descended into hell, if he likewise ascended to paradise. Our explanation was direct, that we hold to no such creed, and that he did not descend into hell at all. 'How then,' said he, 'could he save the souls from thence?' 'The good were already saved,' we replied; 'for it is impossible for us to believe that such men as Abraham, and Jacob, and David went into a place of torment, so long as the Bible does not affirm it. They must have gone to heaven at their death, while only the wicked were sent to hell, where they deserved to be.' He argued that neither did he or his church believe the righteous to have been in a state of torment, but, on the contrary, in a state of happiness, as is represented in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, yet still not in heaven. Such an admission was declared to him to be equivalent to an acknowledgment that they were in heaven, as heaven is rather a *state* than a *place* of happiness.

He hesitated fully to allow such an inference, and asked if we do not believe that they deserved punishment for Adam's sin. We told him plainly, No: but that all men inherit from our first parents such a nature, that not a man upon earth fails of becoming an actual transgressor; so that in consequence of Adam's fall, all men sin and come to deserve punishment for their own offences. 'But how,' said

he, 'could sinful men be saved and go to heaven, when Christ had not yet died?' 'Just in the same way,' we answered, 'that they are saved since his death. For we most firmly believe that had Christ not died, no man could ever have been saved. But that event was so fixed in the divine plan, as to be as much an atonement for sin in prospect as in retrospect; and believers were formerly pardoned for the sake of him who was to die, just as they are now pardoned for the sake of him who has died.'

A word or two from other sources, added to the vartabéd's last two questions, will explain sufficiently the Armenian view of the old doctrine of Christ's descent into hell. The idea that his death could have any effect before it actually happened, is apparently lost sight of; and, Adam's sin being regarded as imputed to all mankind so as to place them under the dominion of Satan, it is supposed that both the righteous and the wicked were at their death thrust by him into the prison of hell. Christ by his death, not only so abolished original sin as to free those who were not yet dead, from this satanic dominion; but he also descended into hell, and as he had dwelt upon the earth thirty-three years, saving all who believed on him here, so he preached thirty-three hours to the spirits in prison, and saved all who believed on him there.* All unbelievers were left still in prison, or rather were thrust down to hell. For I ought to remark, that I have given the name *hell* to the place of departed spirits before Christ, in accommodation to the common mode of speaking among the Armenians, who usually call it *gehén*. They do not strictly consider it to have been really hell, however, but a place specially fitted up for this supposed imprisonment, and destroyed by Christ when he carried the redeemed spirits in triumph to heaven; and the Greek *hades*, or our old term *limbo*, would better express its more proper Armenian name

* Armeno-Turkish Catechism, p. 22, 76.

tjokhk. You will perceive that neither the doctrine nor the place has any connection with *purgatory*.

April 18. We arose at 2, and started at a quarter past 4 A. M. The road recrossed the river by a stone bridge after a mile or two; and we continued the remainder of the day along its northern side, generally in a low level near it. Wild geese and several species of ducks started up from its margin at almost every step. Uneven and woodless grazing lands on our right were bounded at a distance by a range of mountains; on the left was a similar tract without so distinct a limit. Patches of snow were frequent near our path at starting, and increased in number and size as we advanced. No cultivation at all appeared the whole day, and the falling walls of a deserted Armenian hamlet, now and then, explained the reason. We saw but two or three inhabited villages, and their occupants were Kürds.

Our tartar, yesterday and this morning, expressed many fears of robbers in to-day's side. Get through this in safety, he said, and we need apprehend nothing more this side of Erzroom. And he would even insure us here, for the promise of a pair of shalwár. Such intimations from one who seemed, from his manners and his nation, likely enough to be in league with all the robbers in the country, might seem adapted to produce some apprehension. The principal feeling actually excited, however, was vexation at the meanness of his conduct. Still we thought best not to betray it; and merely attempted to make him ashamed, that he a *tartar* should be so cowardly, where he saw us not afraid; reminding him, at the same time, that it would be soon enough to solicit a present, when he had satisfactorily fulfilled his engagement.

Seeing no signs of danger as we advanced, we charged him again with timidity. He attributed the absence of wandering Kürds, either to accident, or to the season's not

being yet sufficiently advanced : but said, that whenever, as warm weather comes on, they take it into their heads to pasture here, every hill around is black with their tents. He doubtless spoke the truth ; and I would add, that in general the country of the Kürds can be travelled with comparative safety in winter. For then they are confined by the snow to villages ; and having a habitation and a name, the perpetrators of crime can be so easily detected that the power of law is felt. But when scattered over the mountains in their summer tents, they can commit a robbery and a murder to-day, and to-morrow, in some distant valley, effectually screen themselves from the search of justice.

Though no nomadic tents appeared, we passed several shepherds, probably from the neighboring villages, carrying in their bosoms the lambs of the flocks they tended. The same scene had already frequently interested us, by presenting the source of the beautiful imagery of the prophet, " He shall lead his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." It is exhibited only at this season of the year ; when lambs are frequently brought forth during the day at a distance from the fold. The new-comers being too weak to follow the flock in its roving after grass, are carried in the bosom of the shepherd, and not unfrequently they multiply so as to fill his arms before night. They are then taken to the fold, and guarded there until sufficiently strong to ramble with their dams. One of these inclosures, when the sheep return anxiously bleating in the evening from their day's pasture, and scores of hungry young ones are conducted by shepherds' boys each to its own mother, presents an amusing scene.

Throughout Armenia neither sheep nor larger cattle, not only of professed shepherds, but of the common villagers, both Christians and moslems, are ever pastured with-

out a keeper constantly to watch them; and invariably are they driven home, or to some inclosure, at night. The necessity of such precautions arises not so much from the fact that there are no fences in the country, as from danger of thieves and wild beasts. The man who should send his cows or his sheep to pasture alone, would have every reason to fear their being stolen before night; and to allow them to sleep out, would be making them an almost sure prey to ravenous animals.

Several beasts of prey abound in Armenia, including, in some parts, hyenas; but of them all wolves are the most common. We saw but five live ones during our journey. They were all in company, and trotted deliberately away from our path as we rose a hill just before reaching Nakhcheván, on our return from Eriván. Another dead one was exhibited to us among the Nestorians. He had burst into a sheepfold with such fury, as to wound two or three dogs which attacked him, and be but slightly checked by several deep thrusts from the daggers of the shepherds, until one at last let out his bowels and despatched him; while in the meantime, he found opportunity to feed his hunger upon the tails of several sheep, which, consisting entirely of fat, were first seized as the sweetest morsel. How forcible, when contrasted with such a state of things, (as it probably originally was,) is the language of the prophet; 'that the Lord will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land, and his flock shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods!' To such security Western Asia is now, and perhaps has always been, an entire stranger; but in our favored country it is fully enjoyed.

The immense pastures of Armenia, and especially of Kürdistán, supply nearly all the great markets of Turkey with mutton; and that is the principal animal food eaten by the inhabitants. The large flocks we encountered just after leaving Constantinople have been already mentioned.

Mr. Jaubert estimates the number of sheep which annually arrive at that capital from Kürdistán at 1,500,000, and says they make the journey in not less than seventeen or eighteen months. The sheep which are slain for the markets of Aleppo and Damascus, also, and even of Beyroot, come from the same productive pastures. They are all of the fat-tail species; we saw no other until we descended the mountains toward Trebizond. Then a species resembling the common one of our own country was pointed out to us by a native of Tebriz in our company, with expressions of great astonishment at their slender tails, a sight he had never before witnessed.

The pastoral habits of the people of these regions have led to the multiplication of a species of dogs of an enormous size, and excessively savage in appearance and disposition. So great a nuisance and so dangerous are they in every village, that we could never walk out in safety, without a heavy cudgel, or some one to guard us. Failing in one instance, between here and Erzroom, to take any such precaution, three wolf-like creatures pitched upon me while walking over the houses of a village, and threw me upon the ground. I expected nothing less than to be severely mangled; but the moment I fell, they suddenly dispersed, and a few prints of their teeth in my clothes was the only harm I experienced.

We reached the Kor-chai, a tributary of the Murád, at half past 1 P. M. Though its course from the mountains on the right can be but short, it was so swollen by the melting snows as to be forded with difficulty, and detained us nearly two hours in crossing it. A mile or two from the river, we reached Kara-keleeseh, 8 hours from Uch-keleeseh, and stopped for the night. It was a miserable hamlet of Persians, (sheey moslems,) who had fled from Eriván upon the capture of that place by the Russians. Among them was one Armenian, and, at the suggestion of our tartar,

who, with the vartabéds at Uch-keleeseh, had recommended his house for its cleanliness, we sought for lodgings with him. The only place he could give us was a little stable, which also accommodated our horses. Our corner was hardly large enough for two to stretch themselves upon the ground; the terrace was broken in above it; and the house could furnish neither carpet, felt, nor hay to sleep upon. We could even procure little else to eat than a scanty portion of the coarsest black bread, and every thing bore marks of extreme filth. Our tartar, still adhering to his previous recommendation of the house, obstinately refused to seek quarters for us among the Persians; and it now first occurred to us, that the cleanliness for which he had extolled the Armenian, was merely ceremonial! The sünni, excluded from the house and hospitality of the sheey for his own alleged ceremonial impurity, retorts the charge, and gives the Christian the preference to his heretical Mohammedan brother.

Not only were we scantily furnished with provisions, but our horses also suffered. The whole village could hardly furnish a peck of straw. Indeed, so much had cultivation been neglected the preceding year, in consequence of the presence of the Russians, that we found a scarcity approaching absolute famine, all the way from Bayzeed to Erzroom. With the greatest difficulty could we obtain food and provender for our small company; and the large caravan with which we thought of coming, and which we had passed near Khoy, was doubtless obliged to linger on the road until the grass had time to grow. The goodness of Providence in preventing our joining it was now visible.

LETTER XXIII.

FROM KARA-KELEESEH TO ERZROOM.

District of Alashgérd—Hospitality at Mollah Soleimán—Papal Armenians—Causes of the similarity between the papal and Armenian churches—Difficult and tempestuous passage of a mountain—Treatment by the Kürds at Dáhar—Descent of the mountain—Civility of the Armenians at Komatsór—Reach Erzroom—Present state of the city—Visit to the mosks—Ineligible location for a mission.

DEAR SIR,

AFTER much difficulty in settling with our host, who charged as high for our entertainment as if the recommendation we had had of his house had been correct, we left Kara-keleeseh at half past 5 A. M. on the 19th of April, the day after my last date. The Murád-chai here turns to the left toward Melazgérd, (the ancient Manavazagérd,) and finds its way, by a pass imperceptible at this distance, through a mass of mountains now entirely white with snow. Inclining more to the right, we crossed in immediate succession some half a dozen tributary streams, so swollen by the melting snow as to threaten ourselves and our baggage with serious accidents. We passed them, however, successfully. Beyond, a somewhat more elevated though level tract extended to the mountain, which had thus far been on our right, but now turned southward and crossed our line of march. It is part of a continuous range, which, extending from mount Ararat in a circuitous course toward the junction of the two branches of the Euphrates, separates the valley of the Aras from that of the Murád-chai. The plain was covered throughout with

snow, from one to two feet or more in depth, and in a melting state; the road was only a narrow foot-path worn through it to the ground; and our horses, too fatigued by sinking at every step into the soft mud at the bottom to walk straight, repeatedly staggered and fell.

According to the vartabéd at Uch-keleeseh, whose conversations have been reported, we had entered Pakrevánt, a canton of the ancient province of Ararád, at Diadeen, and were now in that of Vagharshagérd. The ancient town of that name is still called by the Armenians, and sometimes also by the moslems, Alashgérd, though its more common appellation is Toprák-kúlaah.* It is the capital of the district, and is considered almost impregnable. We left it at the base of the mountains, an hour or two to the right; and took a nearer route directly toward the Köseh-dagh, a conical peak not unlike mount Ararat in shape, which rises to a lofty height from the topmost ridge of the same mountains, and is visible at a great distance. After passing four or five Kürdish villages, still in close winter-quarters, we reached Mollah Soleimán, at the farther extremity of the plain, and stopped for the night.

Fatigued with the exertions of the day, dirty from the filth of our recent lodgings, and chilled with the keen air from the snows around us, we arrived dispirited and in ill humor with the inhospitableness of the country, the people, and the climate. A kind reception in such circumstances was doubly grateful. Mr. Dwight had preceded us to look for lodgings; and when I came up, two old ladies, with hospitality expressed in their countenances, were taking his travelling accoutrements from his horse. Him I found snugly seated in the corner of a large stable well spread with carpets and mattresses. The same kind matrons soon relieved me of my heavy outside garments, and seemed as anxiously to study our comfort as if we had been their

* St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 124.

own sons. We shall long remember the hospitality of Mollah Soleimán, so far superior was it to any we had experienced elsewhere during our whole journey. Nor shall we soon forget our lodgings. We were the companions of some forty or fifty cattle, in an under-ground stable ventilated by only a hole in our corner little larger than a man's hand. By the breath of its inmates, its temperature was raised almost to that of a vapor bath; so that the frosty external air that rushed in near us, immediately precipitated a vapor resembling rain, and we were drenched in perspiration the whole night.

The village consisted of about 25 papal Armenian families, of whom our host was the priest. How long they had been papists we could not learn, any farther than that his father was a papal priest before him, and that his grandfather visited Rome. Their papacy probably dates back to the time of the Jesuit mission at Erzroom, which, as we have already seen, had a station at Bayezeed. He manifested no prejudices against us as protestants, and even seemed to consider us, from the mere fact that we were Franks, more like himself than his neighbors. An Armenian New Testament, which we gave him, was an acceptable present, and he thankfully received a Shoosha tract for his son. For, like the Armenian priests, he was married; and he informed us, also, that in the time of their fasts and festivals, his flock, for the sake of peace, observe the Armenian calendar, though they are allowed to eat fish in lent.

We conversed with him, at some length, respecting the present state of his sect in these parts, and some of his statements are worth reporting. In the town of Moosh, and in the neighboring villages of Norshén, Arinj and Oghúnk, the papal Armenians amount, he assured us, to 150 families, and have one priest. The district of Alashgérd contains, besides those of his own village, 25 families in another named Khastor, and 10 in a third named Iritsoo-

kegh. Khanoos formerly contained one village, and in Pásin there were some, both at Hassan-kúlaah and Mejen-gérd; but they all retired with the Russian army to the Georgian provinces, and now there only remain in Pásin, 15 families at Khorasán, 12 at Aljakrák and 10 at Bashkegh [Bash-köy]. Add to these the few that have assembled at Erzroom since its former papal Armenians left with the Russians, and you have a list of all the adherents of that sect in this part of Turkish Armenia, of whose existence he was aware, and of whom we were able to hear from other sources.

They were formerly well supplied with priests; but when the papal Armenians were driven from Constantinople, all, to the number of nearly 50 he thought, were sought out and banished. So that now, with the exception of himself and another in Moosh, there is not to be found a papal priest of any kind out of Erzroom. No ecclesiastics of European birth or education nearer than Khósrova and Constantinople were known to him, nor could we hear of any bishop of his sect nearer than the latter city. He escaped the persecution himself by temporarily absconding, and is now left with the care of three villages, in which he officiates alternately. Neither of them has any school. The privileges recently granted to his sect in Turkey, gave him no little pleasure; and he related with much satisfaction, an attempt he had just made to retaliate upon the Armenians for their intolerance. Three or four families of them remain in his village; and he had petitioned the pashá of Bayezeed when he passed by a day or two before, to compel them to become papists or to leave the village, pretending that it was impossible for the two sects to live together. The Kürdish chief seems to have had a better sense of justice than the Christian priest, for he gave him no encouragement.—Nearly all the Armenians of this vicinity left with the Russians; and our host affirm-

ed, that they were urged and almost forced into the measure. His own flock went as far as Toprák-kúlaah. While they were absent, the moslems burnt their church.

You have only to add the papal Armenian congregations at Tiflís, Gori, and Kotais, and a small number at Akhaltsikhe to those above enumerated, to complete the list of the few professed papists that we heard of among the Armenians to the east of Tokát and Trebizond. But how far are the Armenians themselves from papacy? That their church partakes largely of the spirit and doctrines of the Romish religion, and in most of its leading corruptions as well as in many minute ceremonies does not essentially differ from it, you cannot have failed to perceive in the course of our narrative. And the interesting question may have suggested itself—from whence came such numerous resemblances between churches so long separated? The answer, I apprehend, is neither difficult nor unsatisfactory.

The slightest acquaintance with ecclesiastical history may convince one, that, before the commencement of the fourth century, Christianity had extensively degenerated from its original purity as a religion of the heart, into a mere profession of theoretical dogmas and the observance of external rites. Such, it is natural to suspect, was the form of it to which the Armenians were at that period converted, and the circumstances of the event, if national tradition has correctly preserved them, confirm the suspicion that they have from the beginning known extremely little of the true conversion of the heart. We are told that immediately upon king Durtád's embracing the faith, the nation followed his example in a body, and were baptized. To say nothing of the doubtfulness of all national conversions, the very hastiness of this proceeding, by allowing no time for competent instruction, shows that the Armenians could not have been enlightened converts; the fact that the Scriptures were not translated into their language until a century

afterward, is an additional indication of the scantiness of their religious knowledge; and the confessed backsliding of many of the nobility into the most scandalous immoralities and the blackest crimes, even during the lifetime of Durtád, proves how superficial was their conversion.*

Thus the Armenian church was a soil well adapted to the rapid growth of all the corruptions, which from that time sprang up, in such speedy succession, in different parts of the Christian world. Even those which then existed were, it would seem, not sparingly introduced by St. Gregory. For, by the immediate consecration of four hundred bishops and a countless number of priests, he betrayed a disposition to multiply an idle and unqualified priesthood; and by the construction of convents and nunneries, and spending the last of his days in a solitary cave, he showed that he was ready to foster the monastic spirit of his age.† So deeply indeed was the taste for monkhood implanted, that his fifth successor is said to have built two thousand convents.‡

Of the rites and dogmas subsequently adopted by other bodies of Christians, there was a free importation, for the two centuries that the Armenians formed a regular branch of the general church. A special messenger was sent to Jerusalem for the ceremonies observed in that church, and brought thence eight canons regulating the sacraments and other rites. For a similar object, a correspondence was carried on with the bishop of Nisibis.§ One Catholicos, who had been educated at Constantinople in the influence of all the secular ideas and regulations introduced into the

* Mos. Chor. Lib. 2: c. 89. St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 11. Chamcheán, P. 3: c. 15.

† Chamcheán, P. 3: c. 15.

‡ Avdall's translation of Chamcheán, vol. 1: p. 182. See also Mos. Chor Lib. 2: p. 88.

§ Chamcheán, P. 3: c. 15.

church under the patronage of Constantine and his successors, brought from thence 'various observances, which, like precious stones, he inlaid into the old.* And several who followed him distinguished themselves by their *improvements* in the services and laws of the church.† So that when, by rejecting the council of Chalcedon in A. D. 491, the Armenians cut themselves off from the communion of the great body of Christians, they were doubtless in possession of all the legendary dogmas and observances which had then been adopted by the Christian world.

The infection of monophysitism suspended indeed this freedom of intercourse between the Armenians and their Christian brethren, and the arrogant efforts of the Greeks, while their empire lasted, to effect a reconciliation, served to widen the breach, and attach them more obstinately to some peculiar doctrines and practices. But the specification of their refusal to acknowledge the council of Chalcedon, to put water in the wine and leaven in the bread of the eucharist, to celebrate the nativity of Christ on the 25th of December, to eat fish, oil, wine, eggs, or butter in their fasts, and to commune on Holy Thursday, as the points at issue,‡ shows that in other respects, they either did not differ from their Greek neighbors, or were willing to conform to them. Nor can it be considered improbable, that every one of the temporary reconciliations that repeatedly occurred, left behind it, amidst an accumulation of irritated feeling, some new item of conformity to the Greek church, especially as more than one of the Armenian Catholicoses decidedly favored the contemplated union. The last of these was Nerses Shnorháli, to this day one of the highest authorities in the church; who, by exerting all his great influence for this object, laid matters in such a train, that

* Chamcheán, P. 3: c. 18. † Ibid. P. 3: c. 25, P. 4: c. 1, 4.

‡ Ibid. P. 4: c. 18.

after his death (A. D. 1173) it was temporarily effected with the general consent of the nation.* The Greek emperors, too, instead of always driving, sometimes allured to a union, and their allurements, such as a present of a piece of the true cross, bits of the crown of thorns, the sponge and the nails used at the crucifixion, and remnants of the Savior's swaddling clothes, and of his mother's apron, were means of corruption.† The Armenians had, indeed, centuries before, begun to venerate relics;‡ but such imperial gifts doubtless strengthened the superstition.

The intercourse of the Armenians with the *Romish* church commenced at the period of the Crusades. It was, from the beginning, of a more friendly, and therefore of a more corrupting character than that with the Greeks; and there are doubtless good grounds for La Croze's suggestion, that very many of the peculiar resemblances between the Armenian and the papal churches, sprung from Romish influence and intrigues in the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.§ The acquaintance was introduced by a personal visit of the first Catholicos, who resided in Cilicia, to Rome, in A. D. 1075. The third from him, after holding two consultations upon the most friendly terms with a papal nuncio at Antioch and Jerusalem, received a staff of office from the pope;|| and all his successors, who to the sixth generation were of the same family, continued the acquaintance, until in A. D. 1197 a formal union was concluded between the two churches.

The object of that measure was to obtain the concurrence of the pope in the coronation of Leo the Armenian king; it was acceded to by the Catholicos, and twelve bish-

* Chamcheán, P. 6: c. 7.

† Ibid. P. 5: c. 1, 7.

‡ Ibid. P. 4: c. 12, 17.

§ Histoire du Christianisme d'Arménie.

|| Chamcheán, P. 5: c. 17. P. 6: c. 4.

ops swore to abide by it. The same Leo within a few years indeed quarrelled with the Latins, and drove them all, clergy and laity, from his dominions. But by marrying a daughter of the king of Cyprus, he led the way to intermarriages with Europeans, and introduced papacy permanently into the reigning family. In consequence of which his successors were ever firm partisans of the Romish church, and some exerted their influence, even to persecution, to induce their subjects to conform in all things to its rites and doctrines. In these circumstances, it is expressly recorded that extreme unction was successfully introduced in A. D. 1243; and doubtless a multitude of innovations accompanied it.*

I need not review the intercourse of the Armenians and the papists since the destruction of the kingdom of Cilicia. Merely add to the preceding statements, the fact that it has been continued by means of papal missionaries down to the present time, with so much success, if we may believe their reports, that not a small number of Catholicoses have sent in their submission to the pope; and you will have a satisfactory account of the origin of the resemblances that exist between the two churches.

April 20. The sudorific effects of our vapor bath last night, made the pure mountain air doubly inspiring, as we mounted our horses at 5 o'clock this morning. Our exhilarated spirits, however, were soon damped by the prospects of the day. We had before us a ride of six hours over the mountain mentioned yesterday. It was the highest we crossed in any part of our journey, and rose up against the horizon like an immense barrier of eternal snow. A caravan at Mollah Soleimán had informed us, that the difficulty of the passage had obliged them to sleep several nights upon its summit; and our repeated inquiries of those we now passed, were answered by some that it was,

* Chamcheán, P. 6: c. 10, 11, 12, 15.

and by others that it was not practicable. The mud at the bottom of our narrow foot-path, soon gave place to snow still deeper and softer, and of course more fatiguing to our animals; and a storm of rain and melting snow continually increased the difficulty.

So gradual was the rise at first, however, that no serious impediment detained us, till we had advanced far beyond the last village. Then, at the first steep ascent, our baggage horses, and the one that I rode, failed through weakness, and fell. The whole mountain before us consisted of ridges and valleys and abrupt declivities, made doubly difficult by the depth of the melting snow; and in some places, immense drifts having during the winter transformed valleys into plains, the caravans had neglected the old and struck out new paths, and the only beaten track conducted us across filled-up abysses of unknown depth. In such a road, few rods were passed without some of our miserable beasts sinking beyond their power of recovery. As often as one fell, he was unladen, raised and laden again; my own I led up every ascent, and even thus could with difficulty get him forward. Once he sunk into a hole so deep that the narrowness of the path alone arrested his body, and perhaps prevented him from entirely disappearing; for there was apparently a small lake under the snow, and his feet rested upon nothing. Had he had strength, in such a position it would have been useless; his owner, our muleteer, seemed as helpless as he, and stood aghast, crying, *wai! wai! ojagh-um batdy!* (literally) alas! alas! my hearth is sunk! Antonio was thrown into contortions of despair by getting his feet wet; and altogether, serious as our situation really was, our party presented, for a moment, a comic scene. We at length drew the poor animal out by his halter, without any more effort on his part than if he had been dead.

Difficulties increased as we advanced. Our baggage horses fell, and had to be unloaded and loaded again at al-

most every step. The storm, becoming a tempest, wetted and chilled us. Our worthless tartar disappeared to seek his own comfort in the nearest village, and left us to find the way over the mountains as best we could. An old Kürd, who had joined our party in the morning, and remained to help us as long as he dare, now hastened away to seek shelter in some inhabited spot for the night. He promised indeed to send us assistance from the nearest village; but how far it was we knew not, nor whether he would think of us again. The day was evidently drawing to a close; and the prospect began to stare us in the face, of passing a tempestuous night on the mountains, without food or shelter, and with the snow for our bed. As a last expedient, the bags that contained our most valuable articles, were put upon our own beasts, and we led them forward to find a village if possible, and send assistance to the muleteer and servant, who remained with the other animals and the rest of our effects. We had not yet reached the highest part of the mountain; the road we were unacquainted with, and it was beginning to be hidden by the newly fallen snow; the wind had acquired almost the violence of a hurricane, and drove the damp snow and sleet against us with such impetuosity as thoroughly to drench our clothes; their weight, as our jaded horses obliged us to walk almost every step, impeded our progress; and all our remaining strength was repeatedly called for to reload the bags, which were repeatedly thrown off in our struggles to master the snow-drifts. As this accident happened once in an exposed situation, a dense dark cloud enveloped us, and a blast so piercing accompanied it that it seemed to penetrate to the heart. An indescribable sensation of horror came over me, and my companion was completely bewildered.

The clouds at length broke away for a moment, as we reached a lofty summit, and showed us that we were at the

top. Far down an unbroken and steep descent appeared the dark sides of naked hills, stripped of their wintry covering by a southern exposure to the rays of the sun. We dragged our horses, with all the speed that our strength and weight could give us, to the bottom; and then stumbling as we could, over snow-drifts and through mud, were at last cheered by a view of human habitations. Just then a single horseman, sent (whether by the old Kúrd or by our tartar at this late hour, we never learned,) to bring up our party, met us. No remonstrances, however, would induce him to go on to the succor of those we had left behind, and he returned with us. The village we had found was inhabited by Kúrd and called Dáhar: we entered it at sunset, having spent thirteen hours in riding six.

Our tartar we found seated by a fire in a spacious stable, comfortably smoking his pipe with the aga of the village. His first words, instead of expressing sympathy for us, or care for those who were still on the mountain, were a bitter complaint of his own hardship, in having had his clothes wet through in one or two spots on his shoulders! Had we yielded to the feelings of the moment, we could have given him a sound flagellation with an instrument more efficient than the tongue; but a word from the aga bespeaking our sympathy for the tartar, convinced us that there was an understanding between them, and that, would we obtain any favors, we must keep in the good graces of both. Nor were we left to infer that the favors we needed could be obtained by merely bridling our tongues. For the old aga, beginning immediately to tell what an asylum was his village, created here by God on purpose for the benighted traveller, and how he, a favorite servant of the pashá, was stationed in it specially to save all who are exposed to perish on the mountains, added, that it was understood, of course, that such services were rendered *for money!* Making a virtue of necessity, therefore, we held our peace,

and engaged him to send out four men on foot, all Kürds like himself, to bring up what we had left, promising them such a reward as he suggested, when their work was done.

About 9 o'clock our muleteer and servant arrived in a tremendous shower, having forsaken the baggage and one horse near where we had left them. The servant, an Armenian who had hardly been out of Tebriz in his life before he entered our employ, being thoroughly drenched with the rain, completely exhausted by fatigue, and stiffened with cold, fell helpless upon the ground as he entered. To our repeated inquiry, what he would have, his only reply was, *sahib öldüm ! öldüm sahib !* master I am dead ! I am dead master ! Our unfeeling host, as if interpreting his wishes, tauntingly cried, ' he wants a priest ! ' (meaning, to give him the viaticum before he should die.) No one would raise a finger to his aid, and we begged in vain for the least article of dry clothing, for food, and even for a fire, to revive him. The old Kürd only laughed at our solicitude, as if the life of a Christian dog was not worth saving ; and at the same moment took off his own shalwár for the muleteer, a Kürd as hardy as the beasts he drove, saying complacently to the tartar, that for the act God would reckon him worthy of a reward ! He soon went off to bed, refusing to give us even a bit of bread for the sufferer ; and a hard morsel, contributed by a more compassionate camel-driver who lodged with us, was the only nutriment we could procure him. A servant of the house tardily consented for a reward to break off a few sticks from the terrace for a fire ; and our own cloaks, which were not quite so wet as his, contributed to revive him.

About 11 o'clock at night, the men whom we had sent for our baggage returned without it, declaring that so violent was the tempest they could not possibly reach it. Our lives were now all saved, however, and we lay down with a light heart, blessing God who had so mercifully preserved

us. The storm, doubtless, increased the difficulty of the passage of the mountain to-day; but two English friends who crossed it a few days later in fair weather, were obliged to spread carpets upon the snow for long distances, to enable their horses to pass. We were assured, that for one or two months in the year, the snow entirely disappears, and then it is passable with carts. From the multitude of abrupt ravines and ridges of which it is here composed, it has received the name of *Gedük-dagh*, or fissure mountain.

April 21. Our first care in the morning was to secure what remained of our baggage upon the mountains; if indeed any remained; for some passing Kürd, or even the inhabitants of this village, who all knew of our misfortune, might have anticipated us, and pilfered every article. No one would move, till those who had been sent last evening had received their reward, notwithstanding they had forfeited it by failing in their attempt. Then, as the morning sun shone out upon the snowy mountains, five or six started, and skipping over them with the nimbleness of deer, in due time returned with all our effects, except two or three articles of slight value. The poor muleteer sustained the heaviest loss, for the horse he had left was found lifeless. The accident detained us the whole day; for it made us completely dependent upon the inhabitants of the village for another animal, and all were so disposed to take advantage of our necessity, that night came on before one could be procured upon tolerable terms.

Our situation in the mean time was not the most agreeable. The old Kürdish aga, our host, laid himself out indeed to be uncommonly accommodating. By rescuing our baggage from becoming a prey to the thievish propensities of his nation on the mountain; he had imposed upon us a real obligation; and now he took constant precautions that none of our effects should be pilfered by his

townsmen, who thronged us the whole day. But every favor was conferred with an affected condescension, intended to show how much it cost an orthodox mussulman to pay attentions to a Christian and a Frank; and with a studious exhibition of difficulties in the way of gratifying us, designed to magnify our estimation of the slightest benefits; and all for the purpose of increasing the *peshkêsh*, which was expected from us in return. All his pretended efforts, however, procured us little to eat besides his favorite pastoral dish. It was *yoghoort* (curdled milk) mixed with water, and thickened with black bread rubbed into crumbs between his hands, differing neither in its ingredients nor appearance, from the dish served out to certain domestic animals from our farmers' kitchens, under the more familiar name of *swill*. For one meal a few eggs were procured; but the request for more was repeated in vain, and we were wondered at for supposing that they, like a Christian village, had fowls and eggs. Aga, or lord, of the village as he was, hardly an article of our dress or baggage met his eye without eliciting an intimation, that it would be a most acceptable memento of our acquaintance. Penknives, and even old spoons did not escape, and a polite request was preferred from his harem, for a taste of our sugar. But his cupidity was most attracted by an old cotton shawl that I had long worn for a sash. We laughed at him for begging it, when he had already a good silk one of Tripoli manufacture wound around his head for a turban. His reply was, that his religion forbade him to pray in a garment entirely of silk, and he wished, therefore, at the hours of devotion, to substitute a cotton turban, to give acceptableness to his prayers! To his credit I would add, that if he took great liberties in begging, he allowed us as great in refusing, and was finally satisfied with certainly a moderate present.

Dáhar is the last village in the pashalik of Bayezeed,

and in it we saw the last of the Kürds. Many individuals of that nation wander indeed over the plains and hills beyond, and particularly was the country between Kars and Akhaltsikhe, formerly infested by them. But their proper country, Kürdistan, can hardly be considered as extending to the west of this mountain. To the east of it, the moslem population is as universally and distinctly of the Kürdish race, as that of Asia Minor is of the Turkish. The fact is proved, not only by their manners and character, but by their language. All are able to converse in Turkish, and generally in Armenian also; but thus far from the Persian frontier the *vernacular* language of all the Mohammedans we met, is Kürdish, and so universal is its use, that it is familiar also to every Christian. Our tartar, besides conversing fluently in Turkish and Armenian, in addition to his native Kürdish, pretended to know the language of a distinct tribe of about 600 families in the vicinity of Moosh, called Zuzijies. We have no evidence of the existence of such a people, besides his assertion and that of the officer of the pashá whom we met at Uch-keleeseh. Both affirmed that they are sünni moslems.

April 22. We left Dáhar at 6 A. M. to complete our descent of the mountain. Stern tempestuous winter still reigned on the heights above, and sprinkled us with some flakes of a snow-squall, as we started; but ere we reached the bottom his snows had disappeared, and the earth was smiling with the aspect of early spring. The change of climate was more sudden than I had ever experienced, and seemed entirely disproportioned to the change of elevation. We threaded in our descent an irregular tortuous ravine, in company with a dashing torrent; and with it were finally ushered into the open province of Pásin, through the Karaderbénd, a remarkable pass between enormous buttresses of perpendicular rocks. They seemed like nature's outposts, to warn against too close an inspection of her myster-

ries on the mountain above. The country beyond presented a surface of gentle undulations and swelling hills, and was covered with a soil uncultivated indeed, but almost without exception arable, apparently fertile, and admirably adapted to the growth of grain. Dely-baba, an Armenian village of some consequence, reckoned four hours from Dáhar, appeared not far to the right of us at 11 A. M. Afterward the large village of Khorasán was seen at a distance, also on the right, across the Aras. At 3 P. M. we passed through a small Armenian hamlet; and at 4 stopped for the night at Kamatsór, nine hours from Dáhar.

We had intended to reach Amra-köy, an hour farther; but the tartar urged, that, it being a moslem village, not so good accommodations could be procured, as here among the Armenians; and the muleteer, with curses upon the aga of Dáhar for his inhospitality, repeated his favorite proverb, *giaoor evy babám evy*, the infidel's house is my father's house, to indicate his desire of lodging with Christians. The hospitable intentions expressed in the honest face of an old Armenian, who presented himself as our host, silenced our complaints; and a stable-room furnished with clean mattresses and cushions for our convenience, satisfied us with the arrangement. Dinner was soon served up in a neater and better style than we had seen among any peasants since we were in this vicinity before; a capacious copper tray being placed upon a regular pedestal, and loaded with various provisions, each in a neat copper plate. In a word, the general appearance of things and deportment of the people, which ten months before had seemed so deeply tinged with barbarism, being now contrasted with what we had since seen, made us feel that we were treading again upon the borders of civilization.—Our host said that his village formerly contained 45 Armenian families, but only 15 remain since the war. He estimated the number of his nation that are left in the whole of Pásin, at five or six hundred families.

April 23. Determined to reach Erzroom to-day, though 11 hours distant, we started at 3 A. M. But so slow was the progress of our miserable animals, that we were until half past 6 in reaching the Aras, a distance of only two hours. We crossed it by the Shepherd's Bridge, which has been already described, and came upon the road we had travelled on our way from Erzroom to Kars. Just beyond Hassan-kúlaah an accident detained us till it was evident that we could not all reach the city before night, and I was sent forward with the tartar to engage lodgings, leaving Mr. Dwight to bring up the baggage. We separated in fair weather, but a shower of rain soon commenced, which quickly changed to a violent snow storm, and continued until night. The snow of winter was still deep upon the ridge that separates the plain of Hassan-kúlaah from Erzroom, and some banks of it were even lying in the streets of the city itself. We arrived at sunset; the storm detained Mr. Dwight until the following morning.

Erzroom, which we had regarded as so uninviting at our former visit, when now viewed from the side of Persia, seemed like another city. Its edifices of stone, though few were of two stories, looked solid and spacious; the pavements of its streets, though made of rocks, had an aspect of neatness; and the windows of its houses open to the streets, though closely latticed, appeared quite European. It still appeared desolate; its bazárs were nearly deserted, and no trade seemed to flourish. Of all its former Christian population there remained only 120 Armenian and 48 papal Armenian families, the latter having recently moved in from other places; of its former 6600 shops, 3000 were now shut; and six tanneries were the only manufactories it contained. During the eight days of our delay we were hospitably lodged by Mr. Zohrab, a papal Armenian, who was acting as commercial agent for the English consul at Trebizond. There were two priests

of his sect in town, and a fermán was daily expected for the completion of a church for them, which had been begun by Russian permission, but left unfinished when the army evacuated the city. No Armenian bishop had yet been substituted for the one who emigrated to the Russian territories.

An energetic pashá now commanded the city and pashalik, and, entering completely into the views of the Sultán, had introduced his new regulations and established order throughout the province. He treated us politely in a personal interview, and readily granted every facility for continuing our journey to Trebizond. Two English friends, with whom we had spent the winter at Tebriz, and who arrived while we were here, received his more particular attentions. One of them having been recommended to him as a brother-in-law of the acting ambassador in Persia, he was pleased to consider him as his guest, and accordingly sent him rations of a sheep, a basket of rice, a tub of butter, and other common articles of Turkish diet. An officer was also commanded to accompany him to the principal mosks, and other curiosities of the city. Being ourselves in the same house with him, his politeness allowed us to share in the favors that were designed for himself and his companion.

The most interesting circumstance of our visit to the mosks was the fact, that in a place formerly noted for being among the most bigoted in Turkey, five Europeans were allowed quietly to enter and examine, in the most public manner three of the principal places of moslem worship. The *imáms*, as the sünnies call their priests, were very polite to us, and not only on this occasion, but so long as we were in the city, were we treated by the people generally with every respect. The mosks contained nothing to be observed, except the usual profusion of sentences from the Korán inscribed in gilded letters upon their walls, and ugly chan-

deliers composed of glass cup lamps and tasseled ostrich egg-shells. Only one, the *Ooloo jami*, which measured 66 paces by 41, was remarkable for size, and that was gloomy, and destitute of beauty or grandeur.

Of the other curiosities, the most worthy of notice was the *Chifteh mináreh*, or pair of minarets. It is a ruined edifice, covering nearly as much ground as the mosk just mentioned, and not far from it in the northeast corner of the citadel. We were unable to learn its exact date or object, but its antiquity is evidently considerable. A double-headed eagle on one of its door posts seems to refer it to the times of the Grecian empire; but two fluted minarets, from which it derives its present name, rising on each side, show it to have been used for moslem worship; and a profusion of blue glazing, which ornaments them and the doorway, betrays a Persian origin, and reminded us of the towers of Shamkór and Salmás. Its roof has disappeared. Along either side within, an arched corridor shades the doors of a series of small apartments, which may have been the cells of either Christian monks, or moslem devotees. Its farther extremity is occupied by a cylindrical structure, perhaps twenty feet in diameter by forty in height, capped with an acute cone in the style of the domes on many old Armenian churches, and lined throughout with Marágha alabaster. It might be taken for the sanctuary of a church, except that no crosses appear upon its walls; while its position in the southern instead of the eastern part of the building, intimates rather that it may have been the kiblah of a mosk; and its form, being like that of three monumental structures just without the walls of the citadel, suggests that it may cover the remains of some departed saint or hero. Local tradition ascribes those, we were told when we examined them at our former visit, to Sultán Mulook, a name which seems to have some connection with the Seljookian dynasty. But in answer to our in-

quiries now, for information from the same source respecting the origin of this building, our informants began to refer it to the daughters of Kai-kobád, and we ceased to question them.

Were it not for the desolation occasioned by the Russian war, you would doubtless be disposed seriously to consider the expediency of establishing a mission at Erzroom. But now, the small number of Armenians remaining in it and in the country around, must be considered a decisive objection. We may be allowed to remind you, also, of the inhospitable nature of the country and climate, as another obstacle ; though without the former, the latter ought not to be mentioned. But it will not always remain in its present state. We doubt not that an Armenian population will again assemble here ; and then it may be made an important centre for missionary operations.

LETTER XXIV.

FROM ERZROOM BY TREBIZOND TO MALTA.

Leave Erzroom—Want of wood in Armenia—Sheitán-deresy—Kara-koolák—State of the season at Chiftlik—Sanjaks of Erzroom—Road through Baiboort—Passage of a mountain in the night—Porodór—Accident in the mountains—Beautiful gardens in a valley—Gümish-kháneh—Dangerous passage of Khójah-deresy—Forest scenery—Poisonous honey—Formation of a natural bridge—Cultivation of maize—Secret professors of Christianity—Reach Trebizond—Its history—Description of it—Its trade—Population—Greek and Armenian moslems—The Laz—Proposed mission at Trebizond—Voyage to Constantinople—Return to Malta—Concluding observations.

DEAR SIR,

THE line of posts to the westward of Erzroom had been re-established since we were here before, and we availed ourselves of it to proceed to Trebizond. With a tartar guide and protect us, we started at 3 and a quarter P. M. on the 2nd of May. Instead of fording the branch of the Euphrates a little below Uluja, as when we came from Constantinople, we continued down its eastern side, sometimes on its bank and sometimes at a distance, through a hilly country, till within an hour of Ash-kulaah. Then, crossing it by a bridge of stone, where it rushes between narrow banks of enormous rocks, we reached the post-house at Ash-kulaah an hour and a quarter after midnight, having made nine hours from the city. Our road from Uluja had not passed a single inhabited house; and here were only a few moslem huts. Its former Armenian inhabitants had emigrated with the Russians, and nothing but dilapidated subteraneous walls remained to mark their abodes.

May 3. We started at 7 and a half A. M. to make a stage of 16 hours, without an intervening village or an inhabited house, by nearly the same road which we had travelled on a former occasion. For twelve hours, to Sheitán-deresy, nothing was noticed worth recording, in addition to our observations when we came; except that the few stunted cedars on the mountain sides, which then appeared so diminutive, now seemed of a respectable size, and were a most welcome sight to the eye that for months had seen not a single uncultivated tree. All the way from Tebriz, a distance of more than 300 miles in a westerly direction, and nearly the whole breadth of Armenia, we had found no forest trees, except the little cluster of pines at the Shepherd's Bridge; nor indeed hardly a wild bush, except in one small spot near the Murád-chai!

The gloomy dell just mentioned, seemed now even more appropriately named than when we passed it before; and as we issued from it in safety, our tartar's countenance brightened, and he thanked God that Sheitán-deresy was crossed before night overtook us. The effect of the Russian invasion in quelling robbery seemed still to be felt, however, and it was well known that no accident had occurred here since that event. But many are the places in Turkey, which, having once got a bad name, long retain it, and are habitually dreaded for years after they have ceased to be the resort of robbers: and probably years of security will not efface from this frightful dell its character as a rendezvous for the sons of violence. Reaching Kara-koolák at 8 and a half P. M. our tartar introduced us to an Armenian post-house for the night, recommending its keeper to us by saying, that he also was a *chórbajy*, (soup-maker).

May 4. We passed at an early hour over the woodless mountains of Otlúk-bely, now spotted with numerous and deep banks of snow, into the extensive plain of Lori. It

was more cultivated than when we saw it before, as was also the whole country from Ash-kúlaah to Chiftlík. We observed no crops but grain. Descending from the next ridge into a deep wooded glen, the infant river of Niksár conducted us by many a winding into the plain of Kerkid-chiftlík. The garden trees around it were just putting forth their young foliage. The almond had blossomed at Tebriz the last of March, but here, for the first time in Turkish Armenia, did we observe any leaves beginning to appear. We found our post-house at Gérmery after dark.

May 5. When passing here before, we understood that this sanják and the one to the west of it, belonged to the pashalik of Erzroom. Now we were assured that Chiftlík is subject to the pashá of Gümish-kháneh. Then, also, the sanjáks of Erzroom were said to be twelve; when last at Erzroom we were informed that they are but nine.* Probably Chiftlík and Sheherán had in the meantime been set off to Gümish-kháneh, as its pashá is now subject to that of Erzroom.

The horses of the post being otherwise employed in the morning, we were detained until 4 P. M. for the menziljy to collect our complement from the neighboring villages. Starting at that hour, we turned to the right toward the mountains of Gümish-kháneh, from the road to Constantinople, which we had followed thus far. It had been our wish not to come on that road at all, but to take another, ten or twelve hours shorter, through Baiboort, a place of ancient Armenia containing about 1000 Turkish and (since the war) 60 Armenian families. The want of post

* Eleven of the twelve sanjáks mentioned to us first, were Sheherán, Erzengán, Chiftlík, Terján, Baiboort, Ispír, Tortoom, Upper Pásin, Lower Pásin, Khanoos, and Erzroom; the name of the twelfth we did not learn.—Our last informant, a young man in the service of the collector of taxes, added, that in the nine sanjáks now composing the pashalik, there are 3800 villages.

horses upon it prevented. Our English friends took that direction, and encountered a snowy mountain between Erzroom and Baiboort, (probably a continuation of Otlúk-bely,) yielding nothing in difficulty to Gedük-dagh. They were obliged again to carpet the melting snow for some distance, and passed a night upon it in the open air.

Just where we entered the mountains, perhaps an hour from Gèrmery, a little hamlet occupied a sunny nook, and charmed us by its green parterres and smiling gardens. Thence we followed up a craggy glen, by means of a decent carriage road, the origin of which we knew not whether to attribute to the Russians, who made here an abortive attempt to penetrate to Gümish-kháneh, or to the peasants, who draw their timber from the mountains upon it with their carts. Two hours from Gèrmery was another considerable village; and beyond, the mountains began to exhibit pines of some size and a variety of smaller trees. At length the road ceased; and we improved the last rays of twilight in clambering up a rough and tedious glen, which led us to the top of a mountain ridge exceedingly narrow and sharp. In the darkness of night, the almost precipitous descent beyond seemed to lead into a bottomless abyss. Most of the company dismounted, but considering my horse surer-footed than myself, I kept my seat. How our sürijy traced the path, or whether he actually did, we knew not, for so intense was the darkness that no path appeared. However, aided not a little by our specific gravity, we made our way rapidly downward, over rocks and stones, without accident to any one.

Proceeding thus for an hour or two, though not always with so rapid a descent, we often wished for daylight to disclose to us the wildness of the spot, which the darkness of night now prevented us from seeing and describing. At 9 P. M. six hours from Gèrmery, we reached the village of Prodór; and were first warned of the fact, by finding our-

selves on the top of a house ! After stumbling awhile over the terraces, we obtained lodgings for the two or three hours we intended to stop. No *straw*, the usual provender, could be obtained for our horses, and after wrangling long with our host, the *sürijy*, as a last resort, accepted of some *hay* !

May 6. We were awake again at 1 o'clock, and started at half past 3 A. M. Objects were but dimly discernible in the light of the moon and of the early dawn ; and our stupid *sürijy*, instead of pursuing the level bed of a small river along which we travelled, led us by a goat's path up the steep face of a mountain which formed one of its banks. The track was too narrow to afford a firm footing to the loaded horses, and they both lost their balance. One tumbled over and over into the middle of the stream below ; the other, though tied to him as usual by the tail, in some way extricated himself, and continuing upright landed upon his feet. The first also soon recovered himself, but his load, consisting of our most valuable clothing and books, had turned, and the bag that was lowest became thoroughly soaked before he could be got out of the water. This stream was limpid and pure, but a similar accident had on a former occasion plunged the same bag in a warm mineral mud-puddle. The affair caused the *sürijy* to smart under the tartar's lash, and detained us about an hour.

We had two mountain ridges to cross during the morning, neither of them inferior to the one of last night. The passage in both cases was effected by ascending a ravine on one side, and descending another on the opposite. Between them was some cultivation, but no village appeared. Their sides were rather sparingly covered with trees ; and on one were a few firs. They presented the boldest features of mountain scenery ; but notwithstanding their height, and near connection with the *Giaoor-dagh* to the west, very little snow lay upon them. The last ravine, by a long and

nearly a straight course, brought us suddenly upon the banks of a large stream, now swollen above its banks and running to the left. It showed us that we had unawares already begun our descent toward the Black sea, from the elevated regions over which we had so long travelled, and accounted for the novel sight of villages with fruit gardens, around them, which had attracted our notice in the ravine from which we now issued.

The narrow valley of the river, at the point where we entered it, seemed almost a paradise. The naked rocks of the cliffs that inclosed it, concentrated the rays of the sun to a degree, which might in time have become oppressive, but the first feeling of which to us, recently from such chilly regions, was like a sudden transfer from a bleak November atmosphere to a smiling morning in May. Along the banks of the stream was a continued series of fruit gardens, crowded with a luxuriant growth of cherry, apple, pear, walnut, peach, mulberry, and other trees, now covered with blossoms which filled the air with their odor. Among them were scattered numerous country-houses, to which their owners are attracted in winter, by the mildness of the climate of this charming valley. We were now upon the high road from Erzroom through Baiboort to Trebizond; and every mile or two brought us to a *khan*, or shop, where provender, butter and cheese, bread and fruit, were exposed for sale. The bread was indeed coarse and black, but it was in regular loaves, such as we had not seen for many a month; and the sight and taste of well preserved apples on the 6th of May was delicious. Every vestige of inhospitable Armenia and Persia was gone. They offer to the passing traveller no such conveniences as these, humble as they were.

Gümish-khâneh is on the left of the river, about an hour and a quarter below where we first came upon it, and not in sight of the direct road. Leaving the margin of the

stream, you climb the mountain by a good path for half an hour, and find its houses near the top, rising one above another along the sides of a ravine, which just below sends out on either hand remarkable projections of perpendicular rock. They seemed to be nature's provision for its defence; but man had not availed himself of them, and not a gun nor a battlement appeared. We reached the town at a quarter before 11 A. M. having come a distance of 6 hours from Porodór. Our observations at Gümish-kháneh were necessarily limited; for, arriving hungry and sleepy, and in haste to proceed, we were obliged to improve the few hours of our delay in eating and sleeping. I have already informed you, that it is governed, as well as the province of which it is the capital, by a pashá of two tails, who is subject to the pashá of Erzroom. Some Armenians of the place had told us at Chiftlik, that its population consists of 200 Greek, 200 Turkish, and 500 Armenian houses; and a papal Armenian of Trebizond had assured us at Erzroom, that, out of 2000 houses which occupy it, 500 are Greek, 70 Armenian, from 5 to 10 papal Armenian, and the rest Turkish.

We obtained no information here to reconcile these discrepancies; except that in passing through the bazárs, hardly any moslems appeared, and we therefore judged that the Christians far outnumber them. We were informed, too, that the Greeks are much the most numerous class of Christians, and have five churches with a bishop of their own; while the Armenians have but one church, and are subject to the bishop of Trebizond. The pashalik, likewise, is said to be full of Greeks; and perhaps for this reason the high mountain in it, which has been repeatedly mentioned by the name of *Giaoor-dagh*, received that appellation, which means *infidel mountain*. In the ravine near the town is the celebrated silver mine, which has given to it its name of *Gümish-kháneh*, or place of

silver. Specimens of solid ore were given us, but we afterward understood, that a dust or sand is procured which is richer. It contains lead and silver, but the proportion of the latter is so small as hardly to pay for refining. Copper mines are found elsewhere, at a distance from the town.—The Russians remained here too short a time to leave many permanent traces, or to take away many of the Christian inhabitants.

We started again at a quarter before 2 P. M. and were soon upon the banks of the river. So long as the gardens continued, our ride was delightful. But at length the valley became too narrow for them, and the perpendicular or impending cliffs of the two opposing mountains which formed it, approached so near each other, as to leave but just room for the river's channel. Our path at one time wound like a goat's track, over rocks high up the mountain side; and at another formed a narrow foothold along the margin of the water. The scenery was awfully grand beyond description. But fear often deprived me of the power of admiration, as my eye glanced to the bottom of the abyss, and showed me how inevitably a stumble of my animal would plunge me into eternity in a moment, or caught a glimpse, (as it did in one place,) of the carcass of a horse, which, by a similar accident, had been precipitated downward, till it was arrested and suspended in mid air between two projecting crags. To travel such a road in the dark was not to be thought of, and so we stopped for the night at a khan, 5 hours from town.

May 7. The distance from Gümish-kháneh to Trebizond is 24 hours. Of course 19 remained to be travelled, and that too with the same horses, for there is no post-house on the road. To accomplish the whole with our baggage by daylight was evidently impossible; and still we deemed it highly important to reach Trebizond to night. It was therefore concluded to push forward ourselves, and

leave Antonio to bring up the baggage as he could. We started at 4 A. M. and followed the river along the same sublime chasm, through dangers as constant, and with apprehension as much on the rack, as yesterday, for 3 hours. Then we left it, and traced to its source on the right, a tributary stream running through a ravine of precisely the same features. Surely never can we forget the sensations of awful grandeur, and of fearful anxiety, which impressed themselves upon our minds and nerves during the whole of our passage through the *Khójah-deresy*, or old man's valley, in the mountains of Pontus. It is nature's masterpiece of sublimity; or rather, an unequalled exhibition of the power and economy of God: a mass of the eternal mountains cleft in twain, to drain off the waters that would otherwise collect in their bosom! a *canal* worthy of the omnipotent hand that formed it! Few places occurred, for a distance of six or seven hours, that we were not tracing a narrow path along the face of precipices, where a false step might precipitate one a fearful depth, and plunge him a mangled corpse in the foaming stream.

Such was the effect upon my nerves, (then doubtless somewhat weakened by illness and fatigue,) that I believe it would have been impossible for me immediately afterward to have travelled in the night, as we had often done during our journey, trusting implicitly to the guidance of a *sürriy*, and the carefulness of our horses. But we judge of every thing by comparison. The natives of these mountains invariably spoke of it as a good road. And very likely I should myself have formed a better opinion, and given a less frightful picture of it, had I never backed any but a strong and sure-footed horse. Thus far from Erzroom, we had not performed a single stage without some of our animals' giving out, stumbling, falling, and lying down, and I could not quiet the apprehension, that these were any moment liable to a similar accident.—This was the winter

road to Trebizond. Another strikes off across the mountains a little this side of Gümish-kháneh, and is five or six hours nearer; but it was not yet opened by reason of the snow. That it is not much safer, may be inferred from the fact, that our tartar having taken it on his return, his horse, a good strong beast which he had purchased at Trebizond, slipped down a mountain and was killed.

We passed, this morning and yesterday, numerous companies of peasants, mostly Greeks, moving as is their custom from their winter residence in the valleys below, to their summer residence upon the mountains. They were generally dressed in the poorest clothing, and had almost no furniture. Three hours from the point where we left the large river, the ravine we followed conducted us, after a long and toilsome ascent, to the top of a sharp mountain ridge, on which some patches of snow were still lingering. We stretched our eyes to the north to discern the sea, as did Xenophon with his Ten Thousand, perhaps from this or from some neighboring height. But, though we imagined that in one direction it ought to be seen, nothing except thin clouds appeared. Not a village was near our route; all the numerous khans we passed were already deserted, in anticipation that the other road would in a day or two draw away the travel from this; and having started without eating, we began to feel the calls of hunger. After a descent of an hour or two from the ridge just mentioned, we were scantily supplied at a *derbénd*, occupied by a guard of miserable fellows, with barley bread of the coarsest, dirtiest kind, and dried yoghoort.

Beyond, the mountainous sides of the ravine we descended were covered from the bottom to the top, with a thick and noble growth of forest trees; among which the beech stood preeminent for its stately height, and the elegance of its smooth tapering trunk. The grateful shade of the forest, the odor of flowering shrubs, the music of birds, and the

murmuring of a torrent concealed in the bottom of the glen, combined to impress upon us almost as deep a sensation of the beautiful, as we had experienced of the sublime in the morning. Among the flowering shrubs, the blossom of the *azalea pontica* scented the whole atmosphere with its strong odor. From it, doubtless, the bees obtained the honey which poisoned Xenophon's army. The same poisonous honey is common now in this district, producing when eaten, headache, delirium and vomiting. A stranger ate some by mistake, with all these effects, only a few days before we were at Trebizond. The natives detect it, we were told, by its being strongly scented with the blossom of the shrub just named. That shrub I have never noticed elsewhere. It exactly resembles the wild bush commonly called honeysuckle in New England, from which children in the spring are fond of gathering a watery excrescence to eat, except that its blossom is yellow.

Ten hours from Trebizond the forest was succeeded by cultivation, and we soon crossed the stream just alluded to by a natural bridge, called by the natives, I believe, *Yerköprüsy*, or earth bridge. It is remarkable for its formation. Just where the road strikes it, a mineral spring, with a copious ebullition of gas, discharges a small quantity of water, apparently the whole of which is turned to stone before it reaches three rods from its source. Similar appearances were also observed on the middle of the bridge, and the inquiry was immediately suggested, whether the bridge itself may not have been formed by such a process. Jumping from my horse, I descended so as to have a distinct view of its upper extremity. The same mineral fluid was dripping down its whole length, and had formed shapeless stalactites, which made up the nether arch, and reached almost or quite to the water's surface. The bridge extends some distance up and down the stream, and being covered with earth and vegetation, the traveller might easily pass

without noticing it. To confirm such a theory of its formation, another was observed not far below, in a forming state. A similar spring upon a high bank was discharging its water toward the river, and by continual deposits had extended a rock nearly half across the stream. In one part, a large mass had broken off by its unsupported weight, and fallen into the current. The water of the spring evidently goes on depositing its layer of stony matter, as it descends the bank, until, reaching the water of the river, it is diluted by it, and the process ceases. Thus a constant passage is left open for the stream underneath, until the rock extends quite across, and rests upon the opposite bank.

The stream continued to flow on, as we proceeded, with the rapidity of a torrent descending from a mountain. Perpendicular ledges of rocks rose up from its narrow banks to a considerable height, and then a steep acclivity extended to the top of the mountain on either side. Neat bridges of a single stone arch, thrown over it every mile or two, facilitated communication between its two banks. Our path generally ran pretty high along the mountain above the precipices; and though now rough from bad weather, was made with some pains for Turkey. I could not yet divest my nerves of all misgiving, the effect of impressions received in the Khójah-deresy; and had we never seen that, we should probably have spoken of the sublimity of the scenery here. The slopes of the opposite mountains, were extensively cultivated; and certainly never before did we dream that such steep declivities could be tilled. The inclination of some patches was not many degrees from vertical; many were evidently too precipitous for the plough to have been used, and must have been worked with hand instruments; and nowhere was a single spot terraced. It proved, in fact, that there was far from being so much exaggeration as we had supposed, in what

a moslem fellow-traveller had previously told us—that the *Laz* cultivate mountains so nearly perpendicular, as to be able to stand to sow and reap, only by tying themselves to trees.

The crops we observed were grain and maize, in nearly equal quantities; the latter of which they were now planting. We observed much bread made from it in Trebizond, and it is known to be almost the only bread corn of Colchis. Some have supposed that maize was first found in America, and transplanted from thence. But the extent to which it is now cultivated far up the Nile in Egypt, and the fact that so long ago as 1673 Chardin found it to be the principal food of the inhabitants of the retired regions of Colchis,* may convince one that it cannot have been of exclusively American origin. Were an old Greek geographer reflecting upon this singular affinity between the productions of Egypt and Colchis, he would perhaps ascribe it to the invasion of Sesostris and his Colchian colony. America can much more fairly claim to have originated the *potato*. That vegetable is not found in the Levant, nor in any part of western Asia, except within the immediate reach of European influence, and there only in small quantities.

The cultivators and inhabitants of this valley are not Laz, but of Greek descent. Some, I believe, still openly adhere to the Greek faith. But many have been professedly converted to Mohammedanism, and pass among moslems as followers of their prophet. But we were interested to learn from good authority, that their profession is a mere pretence. They practise neither circumcision, nor any of the rites of the moslem religion. Secretly they are still attached to the Greek church, and have priests to perform for them its rites. Their names they take from the Old Testament as a common ground between moslems and

* Chardin, vol. 1: p. 161.

Christians. Though inclined to the opinion, that sincerity even in a false faith is more favorable to the admission of truth than hypocrisy or skepticism, I would still suggest, that the cord which thus binds this people to the forms of Christianity, may perhaps be advantageously seized by a missionary to attach them to its spirit. No villages appeared, and their light houses with shingled roofs were perched separately along the declivities of the mountains. We were informed that they are their winter residences, and are in summer entirely deserted. The numerous khans along the road, where they dispose of their produce to caravans and travellers, were already all closed.

At half past 4 P. M. we reached the bottom of the mountain, at a cluster of houses called Jevizlik, 6 hours from Trebizond. It is the last spot in the pashalik of Gümish-kháneh; and was, I believe, the limit of the progress of the Russian arms toward Trebizond. Our süriyj, who in fact was the owner of our horses and fearful that we should ride them too far, after trying every expedient during the day to retard our progress, now positively declared that we should go no farther. Our arguments had been already expended, and we told the tartar, that for aught we cared the *süriyj* might stop, but with *him* our distinct understanding was, that he should see us to Trebizond to night. His tartar spirit was roused for the first time during the journey, and putting spurs to our horses we skimmed over the first two hours in one. Then the poor süriyj, more alarmed than ever for his horses, overtook us. But he was a *Turk*, and we had not misjudged that such a decided step would improve his temper. We proceeded on in greater harmony and at a rapid pace. Our road was good, and the aspect of the country improved as we approached the city. The houses of the people were respectable, and on here and there a height appeared a palace. The hills seemed to

possess an excellent soil, wild fig-trees marked a milder climate, and the improved color of the bread, exposed for sale in the shops, indicated an advance in civilization. We reached Trebizond at 8 and a half P. M. and were hospitably received and entertained during our stay by the English consul, Mr. Brandt.

Trebizond was known to the Greeks by the name of *Trapezus*, and according to them its foundation was laid far back in the ages of fable. As one of the constellation of Greek colonies which illuminated the southern coast of the Euxine, it traced its origin to Sinope, the mother of them all; and Sinope claimed for its founder a member of the expedition of the Golden Fleece. Four hundred years before the Christian era, Xenophon found it inhabited by Greeks, among whom he happily recruited his Ten Thousand, worn out by their retreat of 1600 miles from the plains of Babylon.* It was an important city of the Greek empire of Constantinople, until the subjugation of that empire by the crusaders left it independent. Then its duke, already of the imperial family of Comneni by birth, assumed to himself the dignity of emperor. His dominions extended from Sinope to the Phasis, and his family reigned more than 250 years, from the beginning of the thirteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century. Then it submitted to Mohammed Second, the conqueror of Constantinople, and Trebizond has ever since formed an integral part of the Turkish empire.†

It is prettily situated along an open shore, at the foot of a hill, which rises behind and commands it, and intercepts the view of mountains at a distance. Hardly any remains of its ancient times appear, except perhaps the piers of a harbor, now used only for *kayiks* or small craft; and a distant view left us doubtful whether even they are any

* Gillies' Hist. of Greece. Chap. 26. † Gibbon's Dec. and Fall, L. 61, 68.

thing but natural ledges of rocks just beneath the water. Its present walls, or at least a part of them along the coast now in a falling state, probably date back to the times of the Comneni. Many of its inhabitants, especially the Christians, live without the walls on the east; and numerous fruit trees among which their houses are interspersed and almost hidden, surround them with rural charms. The olive, grape, fig and orange find here a congenial climate; and the lemon too is cultivated with success, but does not come to maturity in the open air. From the warmth of the climate, fevers are not uncommon in the autumn, but we did not learn that it is esteemed specially unhealthy. The plague committed some ravages the last year, and was said to exist at Jevizlík during our visit.

In trade Trebizond has long since eclipsed its parent Sinope, and all its sister ports along the coast. It is now the principal port on the southern shore of the Black sea, and almost the only one visited by European vessels. Still its harbor is bad and its trade small. Some vessels anchor here in an open road on the east, and others for more security stop at Plátana, some distance to the west. Six or eight European vessels only were in port when we were there, and that, I believe, was an unusual number. They all come from Constantinople, and bring little besides salt, and a few European goods for the Persian market. Having discharged these they proceed to Redoot-kúlaah, Taganrog, Odessa, or elsewhere, for a return cargo, but rarely find one here. Native vessels, however, often sail directly for the capital. Of course, there is occasional communication with almost every important port in the Black sea. Besides the English consul already mentioned, who adds to his official functions the employment of a merchant, there is also a consul for the French, and another for the Sardinian nations. Add to these the *attachés* of their consulates, and hardly another European resident is found in the place.

The *Greeks*, both here and in the interior, speak a corrupt modern Greek. An Armenian of the place had told us at Erzoom, that they amount in the city to 900 families; but a more credible informant on the spot assured us, that they are only 500. They have nine parishes, with an archbishop at their head, and some of their churches, which are numerous, bear marks of a venerable antiquity. They had had a grammar school of some respectability; but two teachers having died successively, not long since, it was not at present in operation.—The *Armenians*, also, speak their own language, and amount to 250 families. They are divided into four parishes, with three or four churches, and a bishop, who commands also Gümish-kháneh. He was at the latter place during our visit, and we failed of seeing him; but a letter from him to a protestant friend was shown us afterward, which expressed any thing but a bigoted attachment to his church. We heard of an Armenian school for males, with about 150 children; but none for females was to be found, though a few females we were told can read, and perhaps they occasionally teach a few others.—The *papal Armenians* number from 80 to 90 families, and have one church. They were formerly under the Armenians, and their two priests were banished at the time of the persecution of their sect. One, however, remained in a neighboring village, and he was now in town. Their public services, as is the case with the papal Armenians generally, are in their own ancient tongue, and their clergy are of the Armenian nation, educated at Venice, or in mount Lebanon, or, our informant added, at Mardín. No papal convent exists in town, or in its vicinity; nor are there here any European papal priests.—The estimate of *moslem* families given us varied from 3500 to 4500. Yet our best informants considered the whole population of Trebizond to be no more than 15000 souls. And our own impression was, that the latter estimate cannot be far from correct.

The head of the pashalik of which Trebizond is the capital, takes a respectable rank among the pashás of the empire, and at present bears the title of ser-asker. His province now extends, we were told, from Batoom to Bafra on the coast, and reaches far enough inward to embrace Kara-hisár. Being inhabited by a variety of rude people, and abounding in mountain fastnesses, it formerly suffered much from anarchy, and was infested with robbers. In the country, a sort of nobility called *déreh-begs*, or valley-lords, lorded it over the peasants, had constant feuds among themselves, and despised the authority of the pashá. In the city, assassinations were common, and perpetrated with impunity. Even many of the boldest assassins and leaders of insurrections in Constantinople have originated here. Of course the capital is indebted to Trebizond for some of its ablest men. One of the highest officers in the divan has now a brother here, who is a common *papoochjy*, or shoemaker, in the bazár. The present pashá, though a dervish, and of course a bigot, has effectually put down or destroyed the *déreh-begs*.

A majority of the peasants around Trebizond, we were told, are of the Greek race and speak the Greek language. Some have been already mentioned, who, though still secretly Christians, profess the moslem religion. In the district of Sürmene also, near Oof, about 6 hours east of Trebizond, are many Greek moslems. Of some 30 or 40 villages, perhaps three fourths of the inhabitants were formerly of the Greek church. But being long ago reduced to despair by the oppression of their Turkish masters, they embraced the Mohammedan faith. They still speak Greek.—Among the Armenians, also, of whom there are some in the pashalik out of the city, a considerable body profess Mohammedanism. The district they inhabit is three or four days east of Trebizond, in the interior between Rizeh and Batoom. It is called Hamshén, we were told, and doubt-

less it takes its name from the town of Hamshén, formerly a place of some note in the ancient Armenian province of Daik.* Our informant, a papal Armenian of Trebizond, estimated its population at three or four thousand families, inhabiting 70 or 80 villages. The greater part embraced Mohammedanism some 200 years ago; but they still speak Armenian, and many of their women know no other language.—These are believed to be unique cases in Turkey, where members of a Christian nation have become moslems, without being speedily so amalgamated with Turks or Arabs, as to lose sight of their descent and forget their national language. Long as Mohammedans have ruled over Greeks and Armenians, national landmarks are yet distinctly to be traced, and a body of Greek or Armenian moslems is still an anomaly. How far might the parallel be run between their case and that of the Jews?

A prominent division of the inhabitants of the pashalik are the *Laz*, or Lazians. They live east of the city, along the coast and in the adjacent mountains, bordering upon the frontier of Gooriel. According to the best information we could obtain, they have no original language of their own, but speak a kind of *patois*, which is a Mingrelian dialect with a large mixture of Turkish. In religion they are moslems, and strict adherents of the sünni sect. 'But,' said a Turkish informant, 'we have a proverb, that as among fruits the worst are *cheráz* (cherries); so among moslems the worst are the *Laz*. They will at any time,' he added, 'kill a man for an onion.' They are, in fact, much despised by all their neighbors, and branded with the reputation of being robbers, thieves and villains.

Before leaving Trebizond, I would say a word respecting its suitability for a missionary station. Were one established, it would be rather a mission to Greeks, than to Armenians. The large proportion of the former in the

* St. Mart. vol. 1: p. 78.

city and in the country, you will have learned from what has been already said. Whether a similar wakefulness of mind would make them as promising subjects of improvement as their countymen elsewhere, we did not learn; but we may naturally suppose it, for they are of genuine Greek descent. Our accounts of the existence of their ancestors on the southern shore of the Euxine, as an integral branch of the Greek race, go as far back as we have any that are authentic respecting Greece itself. How numerous may be the relics of the other Grecian colonies along the coast to the westward, we did not learn. But doubtless missionaries at Trebizond might extend their arms far and to good effect in that direction. At Gümish-kháneh, too, in the interior, an important branch might be established. While, therefore, you plant missions in ancient Attica, Argos, Ionia and Byzantium, let not the descendants of the Argonauts be forgotten.

In reference to the Armenians, too, Trebizond would be an important station. Twelve or thirteen hundred souls of that people in the city itself ought not to be neglected. But especially would it be valuable as a key to Armenia. It is the nearest port to that country, and the only one by which books and the various apparatus for intellectual and moral improvement can be introduced. Should Erzroom again become the centre of a numerous Armenian population, as it doubtless will, and missions be established there and around it, Trebizond must be necessarily occupied as an intermediate station. Nor will its importance in a similar relation be hardly less, to a mission among the Nestorians. Such a mission will absolutely require an agent, either missionary or otherwise, at this port. Its vicinity to Redoot-kúlaah, the port of Georgia, and frequent communications with it, might make it important, also, in reference to any connection that may be formed with the missionaries in Russian Armenia. Nor perhaps would oppor-

tunities be wanting of sending out an occasional ray of light to all the dark places around the eastern and northern shores of the Black sea.—In reference to houses and other conveniences for families, to society and opportunities for communicating with home, the little we saw of it gave me the impression, that it would not be far behind Beyroot, when that place was first occupied by our missionaries.

Our old enemy, the ague and fever, which had visited Mr. Dwight before our departure from Tebriz and again at Erzroom, availed itself of our delay at Trebizond to renew its attacks more violently upon us both, and induced a debility, which, added to the excessive tedium and wearisomeness of long journeying by land, made us glad to step upon the deck of a vessel and be carried passively on our way. We embarked for Constantinople on the 14th of May, on board a ship bearing the Austrian flag and belonging to the port of Cattaro, on the eastern coast of the Gulf of Venice. Her master and crew called themselves Illyrians. I had, on a former voyage, become acquainted with some of the same race in sailing on board a vessel of Ragusa, a port on the same coast farther to the north, and well known in the Mediteranean for the number of its ships and the nautical taste and enterprise of its inhabitants. They were papists; but our present captain was of the Greek church, and we were interested to learn from him, that nearly half of his fellow citizens are of the same faith. The Austrian government, he assured us, makes no distinction between the two in their civil rights and privileges. Their language he called Illyrian, and said its affinity to that of the Russians is so close, that the two nations can with little difficulty understand each other; but it has no resemblance to the Albanian. The books of his church, he assured us, are in Illyrian, and are the same as the Russian; to go to a Russian church and to one of their own is the same thing. The whole eastern coast of the

Gulf of Venice, together with Bosnia and Servia, is occupied, he said, by the same Illyrian race. He owned the ship of which he was master, and had grown old in the Black sea trade.

We found sailing in the Black sea very unpleasant, owing to the state of the atmosphere, and the constant changeableness of the force and direction of the winds. The sky was generally hazy and dark, and occasionally discharged violent showers of rain; and the wind would vary almost instantaneously from a gale to a calm, and change its course as suddenly. We made the mouth of the Bosphorus at evening on the 24th of May, and cast anchor opposite Böyük-dereh, to wait for the light of day to conduct us to Constantinople. In the morning a light north wind aided the current in forwarding us onward, and a clear sky advantageously exhibited the exquisite charms of the scenery of the Bosphorus, ever varying as one view after another was disclosed by the windings of the channel, until the Seraglio point with all its splendor burst upon us. After so long a familiarity with the sterile sunburnt hills of Persia, and the bleak mountains of Armenia, followed by the chilling fogs of the Euxine, such scenes were magically enchanting—the pen refuses to portray the sensations they excited.

At an early hour we anchored at the mouth of the Golden Horn; and soon had the pleasure of meeting again our obliging countryman and friend, Mr. Walley, from whom we had parted at Scutari just a year and four days before. Compared with what we had seen to the east of it, Constantinople seemed now to stand high in the scale of civilization; to find ourselves again within the reach of fellow-countrymen and friends, was highly gratifying; and not the least of our enjoyments was that of hearing again from our brethren at Malta. Not a syllable had reached us from thence, nor from our friends at home since we were here

before. In my companion the gratification was heightened by the intelligence of the birth of a first-born son, now several months old, of whose existence he had before had no intimation.

We embarked again on the 4th of June, and touching at Smyrna on our way, arrived safely at Malta on the 2nd of July, after an absence of fifteen months and a half.—The Lord had delivered us from all our fears. The forebodings of misgiving nature or of wavering faith had not been realized. In the midst of pestilence, among barbarous people, and in inhospitable countries, the ‘angel of the Lord had encamped around about us for our deliverance,’ and we were brought back again in peace. Our friends had been equally protected, and now affectionately welcomed us again to their bosom. Letters awaited us from America, also, and cheered us with the most gratifying intelligence of what God was doing for our kindred and the churches of our land. And in the fullness of our hearts, we blessed the Lord, who had ‘redeemed our life from destruction, and crowned us with loving-kindness and tender mercies.’

In view of the extensive ground we have surveyed, a few thoughts arise with which you will permit us to close the report of our tour. Though our object has been specifically missionary, we have not refused to record, in our progress, whatever of general interest has passed under our observation; but in the end, our minds revert to one subject, to the neglect of every other, and that, we doubt not, will be equally prominent in your own reflections. *It is the deeply affecting spiritual condition of the people we have visited, calling upon us to labor for their conversion to Christ.*

Of those people, the *nominal Christians* have engrossed the most of our attention.—To give them the same prominence in your own, we *might* mention the *name* they bear

—the same holy name by which we are called. It indicates an affinity of origin, of the deepest interest: for we have all sprung from the same vine; they soon after it was planted, and some of them perhaps while it was yet watered by apostolical hands; we after ‘she had sent out her boughs unto the sea and her branches unto the river.’ Long since indeed have they been cut off for their unfruitfulness, and cast out as ‘an abominable branch.’ But by reason of this should not our hearts be still more deeply affected on their account? While ‘the boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it;’ ought we not to be moved to cry with the Psalmist, “Return, we beseech the, O God of hosts, look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine?” Is it nothing to us that through their degeneracy ‘the name of God continually every day is blasphemed among the Gentiles?’ that the religion we hold so dear, is made the hereditary scorn of Mohammedans?

But, of the considerations which above all others deserve to be named, the first is, *that they are in a perishing state.* Though called Christians, they are all out of the way, and fatally so. Take the Armenians, as our report has exhibited them to you, for an example. In what do they exemplify any of the genuine characteristics of true religion, if we know at all what true religion is? Both in their views and in their conduct we search for them in vain. Look at the nature and manner of their religious worship, their unscriptural perversion of the ordinances of the gospel, their substituting a system of salvation by external ceremonies for faith in the atoning blood of Christ and all the evangelical doctrines which hinge upon it, and their attempts at posthumous salvation. And add to this, the hireling character and debasement of the clergy, the excessive ignorance and degradation of the great mass of

the laity, and the want of moral principle universally manifested in conduct immoral or vicious. Surely if in them we are to recognize one of the legitimate forms into which genuine Christianity may throw itself, too much credit has heretofore been given to the gospel as a refiner and purifier of our nature.

The only apology that can be made for them is the stale one, which would send to heaven in a mass all the nations of the earth who 'have changed the truth of God into a lie'—viz. *that they are sincere*. The sincerity of their faith I would most fully allow. Judging from its effects, we may well fear that it is more sincere than that of many Christians among us; for it has more influence upon their conduct. But in what are they sincere? In believing that they do what is right? that their daily conduct is pleasing to God? Far from it; they know that they do wrong; that their conduct is sinful. Nor do I believe that the followers of any false religion in the world are sincere in this respect. So far as we have had opportunity to analyze their sincerity, all are ready to confess that in many things they offend God. *They are sincere in believing that their superstitious rites and ceremonies will cancel their sins*. But can such sincerity save them? It is the very thing that encourages them to indulge in sin. It makes them feel secure in courses which they know to be wicked. It leads them blindfold to perdition.

But, though they are in a perishing state, their rescue is not to be despaired of. For, another consideration we would suggest respecting them is, *that their reformation is practicable*. It is so because the truth can be brought to bear upon their minds. Christians in Mohammedan countries are accessible to missionaries.—In the *Turkish empire*, may the missionary enter at every point and labor among them, with no Turkish ruler disposed of *himself* to hinder or

make him afraid in so doing. Wherever he finds them, may he plant the standard of the cross, and moslems, if left to themselves, will look on with indifference. Only from the Christians may opposition be expected to originate. And thus far, we have reason to bless God, that the *Oriental* churches have, with hardly an exception, been indisposed to resort to it. From papists, wherever we meet them, opposition is to be expected. From them, it is believed, has arisen all that has been experienced. But they are only a few hundred thousands, while their Oriental brethren amount to millions. And the latter, wherever the experiment has been tried, unless under papal influence, allow us to instruct and enlighten them by schools, by circulating Bibles and tracts, by religious conversation, and expounding the Scriptures. Already are missions established among them at several places; other places have long been known as presenting open doors for us; and our present journey has added to the number of prospective stations, which can be immediately occupied to advantage.— We have been led into *Persia*, also, and there likewise have found a field ripe for the harvest. In view of what has been already said respecting the Nestorians, we may ask, what shall hinder us from preaching the gospel in Persia also? There lies, indeed, between it and Europe, an inhospitable tract of country difficult to be passed. But shall that be an insurmountable barrier to Christian benevolence, which English travellers annually pass, for wealth, for honor, or for curiosity? Let every Christian blush for the weakness of his love to souls that will not answer, No!

And when truth can thus be brought to bear upon the mind, are we not, as Christians, bound to believe a reformation to be practicable? Every *scriptural* ground of discouragement is removed. God's promises of a bless-

ing upon the preaching of his word are made applicable; and to be discouraged is to want faith in God. Be it that obstacles to the triumph of truth, arising from ignorance, from prejudice, or from bias to sin, are exceedingly great, yet so long as the truth will be heard, the power of God is pledged for its efficacy. And what other encouragement has an evangelical minister of the gospel anywhere? He can in no case change the heart. It is his to use the means, and look to God by faith to give them efficacy. Only one circumstance can clear the Christian from the heavy charge of unbelief in being discouraged from attempting the conversion of men in any part of the world; and that is, an impossibility, from whatever cause, of bringing the means of grace to bear upon the mind. Nay more, the same circumstance alone can clear him from the heavier charge of disobedience to the command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." It was only from those cities that *would not receive nor hear them*, that the twelve were authorized to depart, shaking off the dust of their feet against them. Jonah was no more excusable for refusing to publish the word of the Lord in the heathen Nineveh, than if he had been ordered to preach it at Jerusalem. Oh! how many like Jonah have there been in the church, shrinking from that obedience to the command of their Savior, which would long ere this have carried her triumphant over every false religion to the final consummation of her glory! Groaning under God's curse upon them, how often has she been tossed upon the billows of war and persecution, or, what is not a less hindrance to her progress, been made to lie still and decay in the dead calm of unevangelical formality! The remnants of her wreck are scattered through the Mohammedan empires; and her motionless frame lies rotting upon Christian Europe! May no disobedient Jonahs

bring curses like these upon our American Zion! If we shrink not from our duty to the world, she will glide safely into the haven of millennial rest.

Another important consideration is, *the relation in which these nominal Christians stand toward Mohammedans.*— Their present influence is exceedingly to be deprecated. The moslem has hitherto known Christianity only as the religion of the Christians around him. And in such a position are they placed by his oppressive laws, that in all the associations of his earlier and his riper years, they occupy the rank of despised inferiors. Such too, I am sorry to say, is their conduct, that he has ever been able to look upon the comparative practical effects of their Christianity and of his Mohammedanism with self-congratulation. Never in the course of their history, have Mohammedans been brought in contact with any form of Christianity that was not too degenerate in its rites, its doctrines, and its effects to be worthy of their esteem. Preach to him Christianity, therefore, and the moslem understands you to invite him to embrace a religion which he has always regarded as beneath him, and as less beneficial than his own.

But their influence may be made to be as salutary as it is now deleterious. Indeed the missionary, when he sees the pecuniary oppressions, civil disabilities and systematic contempt, to which, after centuries of unshaken endurance, they still perseveringly submit for their religion, when a profession of Mohammedanism would at any moment bring relief from them all; and is led to wonder at the steadfastness with which they have clung to the mere *form* of religion so long after they have lost its *power*; will perceive in it the orderings of a wise Providence, that a door might be kept open through which missionaries may enter, and plant the standard of the cross in the centre of the otherwise impenetrable bulwarks within which Mohammedanism

has intrenched itself. If corrupt forms of Christianity have prejudiced moslems against it, and the ungodly lives of its professors give them complacency in their own corruptions, present to them Christianity in its purity, exemplified in lives of piety, and their apology for rejecting it must vanish; the glory of their own religion must be turned into shame. Let every missionary station raise up from the corrupt mass of nominal Christians around it, a goodly number of true followers of the Lamb, and it will be a city set on a hill which cannot be hid, a light to lighten the gentiles also. Had the churches of the East remained as when the apostles planted them, how long since would Mohammedanism have shrunk away from their holy contact? Or rather, would it have ever existed? Restore to them their primitive purity, therefore, and the prop upon which Mohammedanism has so long stayed itself is gone, and it must fall. Remove it from the darkness, where like an unsightly weed it has grown so rankly, into the noontide blaze of true religion, and it must wither and die.

Our encouragement is, that while 'the god of this world' has so carefully defended this strong citadel of his dominions on every other side, he has here left open a point of attack. Mohammedan law denounces death without mercy upon every apostate from Mohammedanism; and wherever that law is in force, direct attempts to make proselytes may naturally be regarded as highly objectionable. But by laboring among Christians, we gain an easy entrance into the heart of our enemy's territory. And if the victory over the false prophet is to be one of the most glorious in the final triumphs of the Lamb, should not we deem ourselves happy in being able to engage thus early and advantageously in the contest, perhaps hard and long, from which it is to result? How different would have been the prospect had Mohammedans exterminated instead of tolerating Chris-

tianity, in the regions which they conquered! To be sensible of the contrast, look along the whole coast of northern Africa, where the flock once fed by Augustines and Cyprians has so long been extinct, and a few foreigners and Jews are now the only tangible population. The bearing of our labors in Western Asia upon Mohammedanism, increases inconceivably their importance; and we look with intense interest upon every new station that is formed, as an additional intrenchment thrown up against the armies of the false prophet.

NOTE.

THE value of foreign denominations of money, and measures of distance is generally explained in the body of the work, where their names first occur. The reader, however, may be liable to forget the explanations as he proceeds; and it has therefore been thought best to arrange them in the following table, for the sake of easy reference.

To prevent mistake, it is necessary to observe, that the rate of exchange is liable to great and constant variations in Turkey. The Spanish Dollar was worth $15\frac{1}{2}$ Piastres when we landed at Smyrna, and that rate is made the basis of the following calculations. But the estimates thus formed would not express the true value of Turkish money a year before, nor at the present time.

A tabular view is subjoined, of the estimated distances between the principal places visited during the journey, beyond Constantinople. It is calculated from minutes which were kept of the length of each stage as it was travelled, and of course does not aim at perfect accuracy. If two of the distances, which were passed over twice, be doubled, it gives the estimated length of the whole journey.

MONEY.

<i>Para</i> , the smallest coin of Turkey,	- -	about $\frac{1}{6}$ ct.
<i>Piastre</i> (40 paras), the present unit in Turkish	- - - - -	“ 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ cts.
<i>Silver Rouble</i> or <i>Manet</i> , the Russian dollar,	- - - - -	“ 75 “
<i>Ducat</i> , a gold coin of Russia, equal to the ducat	- - - - -	“ 2,25 “
of Holland,	- - - - -	“ 2,25 “

<i>Abbas</i> , a silver coin of Tiflis,	}	-	-	about 15 cts.
<i>Penabad</i> , do. Shoosha,		-	-	
<i>Shahy</i> , a Persian denomination,	-	-	-	“ 1½ “
<i>Sahib-koran</i> , a Persian silver coin,	-	-	-	“ 30 “
<i>Real</i> , do. do.	-	-	-	“ 35 “
<i>Toman</i> , a Persian gold coin,	-	-	-	“ 3,00 “

MEASURES OF DISTANCE.

<i>Hour</i> of Turkey,	-	-	-	-	-	miles. about 3
<i>Verst</i> of Russia,	-	-	-	-	-	“ $\frac{2}{3}$
<i>Fursakh</i> , or <i>Aghaj</i> of Persia,	-	-	-	-	-	“ 4

DISTANCES TRAVELLED.

From Constantinople to Tokat	-	-	-	miles. 474
From Tokat to Erzroom	-	-	-	300
From Erzroom to Kars	-	-	-	108
From Kars to Tiflis	-	-	-	182
From Tiflis to Shoosha	-	-	-	120
From Shoosha to Nakhchevan	-	-	-	124
From Nakhchevan to Echmiadzin	-	-	-	96
From Nakhchevan to Khoy	-	-	-	50
From Khoy to Tebriz	-	-	-	88
From Tebriz to Oormiah	-	-	-	120
From Tebriz to Bayezeed	-	-	-	164
From Bayezeed to Erzroom	-	-	-	147
From Erzroom to Trebizond	-	-	-	219
Making the whole distance travelled by land after leaving Constantinople	-	-	-	2408

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